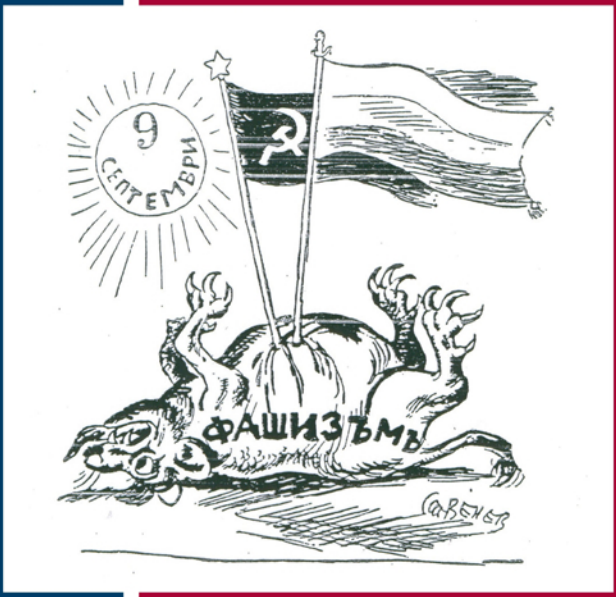
Nationalism from the Left

The Bulgarian Communist Party during the Second World War and the Early Post-War Years

Yannis Sygkelos



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By
Yannis Sygkelos

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On the cover: Venev, Rabotnichesko Delo #03, 20.09.1944. The beast of fascism has been killed by the national and the red flags. Yet the national flag overshadows the red one. The sun of the new socialist era is shining, demonstrating the date of the communist takeover.

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ACRONYMS

AgitProp	Agitation and Propaganda department of the BCP
BAN	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
BANU	Bulgarian Agrarian National Union
BANU-Vrabcha-1	Bulgarian Agrarian National Union—Vrabcha-1
BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party (Bulgarian Workers' Party)
BWPc	Bulgarian Workers' Party (communists)
BWSDP	Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party
BWSDP (narrow socialists)	Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party (the group which was transformed into the Communist Party)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
Cominform	Communist Information Bureau
Comintern	Communist International
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPUSA	Communist Party of the USA
CPY	Communist Party of Yugoslavia
DP	Democratic Party (Bulgaria)
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
ELAS	National People's Liberation Army
IMRO	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation
KKE	Greek Communist Party
KPB	Communist Party of Belgium
KPD	Communist Party of Germany
KSČ	Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
MKP	Hungarian Communist Party
NOVA	National Liberation Insurrectionary Army
PCE	Communist Party of Spain
PCF	Communist Party of France
PCI	Italian Communist Party

PCR	Romanian Communist Party
PPR	Polish Workers' Party
RP	Radical Party (Bulgaria)
RSFSR	Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics
SED	Socialist Unity Party

TRANSLITERATION

А	A
Б	B
В	V
Г	G
Д	D
Е	E
Ж	ZH
З	Z
И	I
Й	I
К	K
Л	L
М	M
Н	N
О	O
П	P
Р	R
С	S
Т	T
У	U
Ф	F
Х	H
Ц	TS
Ч	CH
Ш	SH
Щ	SHT
Ъ	I
Ь	I
Ю	YU
Я	YA

INTRODUCTION

Marxism and nationalism are two of the most significant ideologies of the 20th century. The political and historical significance of the dialogue between them has been analysed by many authors, non-Marxists as well as Marxists. A number of contemporary Marxists have argued that Marxism could not disregard nationalism. Munck (1986), more especially, argues that nationalism could be compatible with socialism, if both are informed by a genuine democratic dynamic. Nimni (1991) shares Munck's view, and proposes Bauer's approach to the national question. Schwarzmantel (1991) presents nationalism as an opportunity for socialism rather than a threat. He suggests that a left-wing, socialist nationalism can strengthen the Left both in theory and practice. Debray (1977) argues that whenever communism is meaningful, it is national communism.

Nairn (1977) and Hobsbawm[1] point out that anti-imperialist Third-World movements noticeably reinforced the association of Marxism with nationalism. Nairn underscores that anti-imperialist peripheral movements resisted the imperialistic domination of the centre by forming a militant, inter-class community mobilised by its national identity. All of the above Marxist authors have essentially argued that Marxists could benefit from nationalist movements, as nationalism could and did reinforce and empower communist parties. Yet, admitting that Marxism has turned to nationalism seeking support and popularity, they have identified the relative weakness of the position of Marxism in its dialogue with nationalism.

They have, however, not taken into consideration a significant parameter of the above-mentioned dialogue: the syncretism of Marxism and nationalism might have made Marxist parties larger and more successful, but they might also have led to a profound transformation. This may be the reason why there were nationalist wars between Marxist, allegedly internationalist, states (Cambodia, Vietnam, and China), which were not supposed to happen. Interestingly, Hobsbawm notes that "Marxist movements and states have become national not only

[1] Hobsbawm (1993): 148.

in form but in substance, i.e. nationalist"[2] without, however, paying much attention to the repercussions of this event. Without completely abandoning Marxism or formally renouncing internationalism,[3] communist parties became, it will be argued, what might be called Marxist nationalist parties.[4]

Not only Marxist but also a number of non-Marxist authors have focused on what they have seen as Marxism's weakness in countering nationalism. Gellner, for example, has developed the theory of the 'terrible postal error'; that is, that instead of being sent to classes, the awakening message has been sent to nations. As a result, nationalism rather than Marxism has been the predominant and most popular ideology of modernity. Yet it has also been argued that, in many cases, in order to emerge triumphant, nationalism itself has seemed to need Marxism. Munck, for instance, has shown how Marxism influenced nationalism in a number of ways, citing examples of a range of national liberation movements with a pronounced Marxist character.[5] Indeed, it could be argued that many Third-World nationalists turned to Marxism-Leninism, because it helped to explain away the backwardness of their countries and provided national liberation movements with an effective anti-imperialist discourse. This generous contribution of Marxism to its ostensibly rival ideology has been largely ignored.

Although there has been some work at the general level on the dialogue between Marxism and nationalism, only a few books have been recently published on national discourses articulated by Eastern European communist parties in the Second World War and early post-war years. Before the fall of communism, both communist and non-communist scholars took the internationalist 'imagery' of communist parties for granted, to a large extent, so that the national discourses of communist parties have been greatly underestimated, if not omitted

---

[2] Hobsbawm (1977): 13.

[3] The nature of internationalism, as we shall see, had been problematic even since the dawn of the 20th century.

[4] Harris (1990): 1 notes that "in Angola and Mozambique, there are strange creatures called 'Marxist-Leninist states'…but the media mean no more by this phrase than radical nationalists".

[5] Cabral adopted Marxism to realise national aspirations; the Cuban revolution fought the foreign enemy (US imperialism) and its local representative (the dictator Batista); and Guevarist organisations built 'National Liberation Armies', had Patria o Muerte (Fatherland or Death) as their main slogan, and placed themselves in a line of continuity with the pantheon of not socialist but nationalist heroes, in Munck (1986): 108, 114–115.

completely. In addition, from within, communist parties did not pay attention to their nationalism, because they were not able to recognise it. The release of archives after 1989 and the challenge of Cold War monolithic and binary versions allowed for a much more comprehensive understanding of the 1940s and communist takeovers.

It has, therefore, been argued that during the 1940s Eastern European communist parties eschewed nationalism, if not that they were purely internationalist.[6] Many authors dated the turn of Eastern European communist parties to nationalism only in the late 1950s. According to Verdery (1991), this happened when the PCR sought to lessen Soviet control over it, using nationalism in order to discursively construct the image of a strong, unified nation-wide will. As Todorova (1995 and 1993) has explained, this was because at that time étatist communism had become dominant at the expense of classical Marxism. King (1980) and Fejto (1974) have attributed legitimisation reasons to this phenomenon: removing the stigma that the communists were mere agents of Moscow and securing popular support for the state-party goal of the country's modernisation.

As we shall see, the argument of this book accepts all the above reasons for the communist parties' turn to nationalism but dates this rather earlier than the fore-mentioned authors. Indeed, in recent decades, evidence has emerged of a systematic and widespread adoption of nationalism by Marxist parties before and after the Second World War. To begin with, Martin, Brandenberger, Slezkine and Hobsbawm have identified this phenomenon as stemming from the 1930s. Martin (2001) has described how the Soviet Union fostered nationalities by building institutional forms characteristic of the modern nation-state: leaders, language, and cultural institutions. In particular, he has written about the 'paradox of internationalism through nationalism' and manifested Stalin's categorical rejection of internationalism in 1929–1930.[7] Brandenberger (2002) has brilliantly deployed national Bolshevism, that is, the restoration of pre-revolutionary national heroes and events, which became a catalyst in the process of Russification through mass culture, mass education, and the arts. Brandenberger has shown that national Bolshevism is more closely associated with a

[6] Pundeff (1970): 150, 153. This is the first discussion of Marxism and nationalism in Bulgaria. See, also, Mutafchieva (1995): 8–12 and Bell (1986).

[7] Martin (2001): 5 and 245–249.

Russian populist nationalism than with classical Marxism or proletarian internationalism.

In the same vein as Martin, Slezkine has pointed out that Stalinism encouraged ethnic diversity. Hence, the 'little nationalism' of Soviet republics had been praised since the 1930s: at the Congress of the Soviet Writers in 1934, "all Soviet peoples possessed, or would shortly acquire, their own classics, their own founding fathers and their own folkloric riches".[8] Concerning Soviet Turkmenistan of the 1920s and 1930s, this process is brilliantly unravelled by Edgar (2004), who expounds on the remarkable interaction between Soviet policies and tribal identities. The example of Turkmenistan amply shows the success of the Soviet nationalities' policy in making national republics and in fostering national demands. After the Second World War Russian nationalism (overestimating everything Russian, rethinking history along nationalistic lines, and assaulting the internationalist-cosmopolitan intelligentsia at the end of 1940s) would coexist with 'little nationalism', that is, the nationalism of non-Russian republics. With regard to European communist parties, Hobsbawm notes that already in the mid-1930s "the communists, proclaiming an anti-fascist patriotism or nationalism, had attempted to recapture the symbols of patriotism"; as a result, "the combination of the red and national flags was genuinely popular".[9]

Since there was an official Soviet nationalistic tendency before and during the 1940s, why was there not one within the Comintern and in the Balkans? And, given the 'little nationalism' of non-Russian Soviet republics, why would there not also be People's Republics expressing their nationalism? Recent research investigates the communist parties' turn to nationalism in the 1940s. To begin with, Abrams (2004) shows how the KSČ gained a hegemonic role in Czech political life via reinterpretation of Czech history and reorientation of the Czech nation to the Slavic East. Though largely focused on intellectual debates, it arguably interprets how the KSČ gained legitimisation and consensus within Czech society and became huge, dynamic and powerful.

Mevius (2005) also dates the nationalist policy of the MKP to the 1940s. He argues that Hungarian communists adopted nationalism mainly in order to refute anti-communist claims that they were 'agents of Moscow'. Although his focus is on Stalinist directives and the

[8] Slezkine (1996): 225.
[9] Hobsbawm (1993): 145–147.

Party's tacticism, he eloquently presents communist attempts to portray themselves as the heirs to the national past and traditions as well as the defenders of national interests; he also analyses the meaning and the content of socialist patriotism. Mevius attributes deliberate, utilitarian, pragmatic and tactical attitudes to the Hungarian communist leadership with regard to their national discourse.

Spilker (2006) provides evidence of the nationalist propaganda of the KPD/SED during the time of Allied occupation and the formative years of East Germany. He argues that patriotic discourse underpinned the strategies of the KPD/SED to mobilise the German masses, to portray the communists as the advocates of peace and German unity, to destabilise Adenauer's regime, and to challenge the existence of the Federal Republic. Although his research is rich in archive material, he does not attempt a thorough discourse analysis of the KPD/SED's nationalism. The question of why a communist party resorted to the use of patriotic rhetoric and to what extent such a discourse affected it at the levels of theory and practice remains unresolved.

Taking into consideration all the afore-mentioned studies on communism and nationalism, there is an emerging interest in the interplay and intersection of communism and nationalism not only in the Soviet Union but also in other European countries. This book aims to contribute a pioneering research study to the ongoing debate on a quite unexplored topic: the national discourse of communist parties in the 1940s, that is, a period during which they developed popular resistance movements all over Europe, became huge and seized power in many European countries. Although the book thoroughly examines the case of the BCP (a self-proclaimed Marxist institution, which identified itself with Marxist institutional domains, that is the Comintern and the Cominform, and a centralized and completely Stalinized party), what happened in Bulgaria is fairly representative of all Eastern European communist countries during the early post-war period. It can be observed that after 1944 peoples' republics deliberately flagged nationhood in many ways; consciously conflated national and socialist imagery; and systematically presented themselves as heirs to all the heroic and glorious pages of the national past as well as defenders of national interests and causes. What makes the Bulgarian case specific is that the Party's prominent and historic leader Georgi Dimitrov, a major Stalinist himself, was the architect of the popular front and the main developer of the so-called 'national line' of the Comintern; his speech at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern could be considered

as a fundamental text of the theoretical syncretism of Marxism and nationalism. Furthermore, key Bulgarian communist policy-makers were politically educated in Moscow and witnessed the adoption of core nationalist assumptions, during the Russification and the Great Patriotic War. For all these reasons then, it could be argued that the BCP was an ideal domain, where 'Marxist nationalism' as introduced by popular front tactics could be articulated and pursued. Additionally, the Bulgarian communists applied this national policy to a pro-Slav country with traditionally friendly relations and deep-felt emotions towards Russia; this in contrast to other Eastern European states which had often been historically opposed to Russia. All in all, this meant that the BCP's national propaganda had a greater chance of success and an audience more familiar with the communist nationalist project than the nationalist propaganda of other communist parties.

More generally, by studying the version of Marxist nationalism[10] articulated by the BCP, this book intends to provide an understanding of other versions of the same world-wide phenomenon on many levels. It suggests future lines of inquiry on the relationship between Marxism and nationalism in Bulgaria after the period in question. Three periods of research interest may be defined: the so-called Stalinisation era (when a populist nationalism seemed to emerge), Zhivkov's era (when an old-fashioned nationalism resurged), and finally post-communism (when different versions and tendencies of nationalism co-exist). Marxist nationalism of the 1940s seems to play a significant role in the subsequent versions of Bulgarian nationalism. Contemporary Bulgarian political culture cannot be divorced from its communist legacy. The conflation of nation and people that versions of Marxist nationalism had been elaborating for a half a century has left its imprint on Bulgarian self-representations in the post-communist era. The flagging of nationhood, anti-Turkish rhetoric, belonging to the Slav family, claims on national sovereignty; all are indicators that nationalism was not suddenly resurged after 1989 but rather entrenched in Bulgarian

[10] I use nationalism interchangeably with patriotism as the nation-state is the common object of loyalty and identification. Therefore, Bulgarian communists could be considered as nationalists despite the fact that they were self-defined as patriots. At this point, we shall agree with Spencer and Wollman (2002): 94–118 that dividing nationalisms into good and bad models is flawed, since apparently different models of nationalism have much more in common than they have differences (notably the definition and exclusion of the other), while the course of any specific nationalism eventually meets both models of a dualistic approach.

society. Beyond European communist parties of the 1940s, Marxist nationalism was also articulated by Third-World movements, uprisings and revolutions. Anderson argues that "since World War Two every successful revolution has defined itself in *national* terms", giving examples such as the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.[11] An account of revolutions in Latin America as well as in Africa could also be added to Anderson's examples. In so many cases all over the world, communist parties and regimes mantled the cloak of nationalism claiming that expulsion of foreign invaders was associated with restructuring the traditional social order and egalitarianism. Last but not least, nationalist discourses have been articulated by left-wing armed political organisations in both the Third World and industrial or post-industrial societies. For instance, the Greek armed political organisation 17N used nationalism, Leninism, and anti-imperialism[12] to legitimise political assassinations and other activities.

This book explores and interprets a significant version of the worldwide phenomenon of Marxist nationalism. It draws on documents from the BCP Archives and Records including the files of BCP Plenums, Congresses and Conferences; Politburo, Secretary, and Central Committee; Agitation and Propaganda Department; Domestic and International Department; Partizdat (BCP's publishing house) Department; and the personal files of the most significant cadres of the BCP. It also relies on documents from Bulgarian State Archives and Records including the files of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front; Ministry of Education; and Ministry of Information and Arts. In addition, issues of the 'Rabotnitsesko Delo' (the official newspaper of the BCP) and 'Fatherland Front' (the official newspaper of the regime), Bulgarian communist publications, and historical textbooks have been examined and systematically used. After briefly outlining the 'prehistory' of the symbiosis between Marxism and nationalism within the international communist movement, the book addresses the specific adoption of nationalism by Bulgarian communists before and during

[11] Anderson (2002): 2.

[12] *Manifestos 1975–2002* (2002) and Kassimeris (2000): 106–151. 17N manifestos and communiqués raised issues such as national independence and sovereignty, Turkish expansionism and Turkish foreign policy aggression, US imperialism, US occupation forces, domestic agents of NATO and CIA, Anglo-Saxon capitalism, anti-colonialism and national self-determination, anti-EU rhetoric, the Cypriot issue, anti-privatisation and nationalisation.

the Second World War (ch. 1), and presents, examines and interprets the extensive and systematic nationalist discourse as articulated by the BCP in several domains: domestic politics (ch. 2), international politics (ch. 3), education and historiography (ch. 4), and anniversaries and symbols (ch. 5). Within this framework, the Marxist nationalism of the BCP is contextualised in terms of period, institutions, and events. In the process, parallels of other European communist parties are discussed. Thus, in the late 1950s, the nationalism of communist parties became completely overt and dominant, as limits set by the Soviet bloc substantially widened. Finally, the three appendices at the end of the book provide details of political parties, figures and numerical data; where appropriate, there are references to these appendices in the footnotes.

The main methodological and theoretical background for my book draws upon different theoretical approaches to discourse theory and analysis.[13] These include Foucault, his 'archaeological method' and the notion of *epistemes* or discursive formations; Laclau and Mouffe's theory; critical discourse analysis (Fairclough); and discursive psychology (Billig). Theoretical perspectives on the interplay between domestic and international politics; the role of historiography in constructing versions of the national past; and the literature on anniversaries and commemorations as a key means to construct collective memory, have all provided important insights. Indeed, it is increasingly recognised that discursive practices revolving around the notion of the nation include practices of remembering and commemorating, of essentially establishing narratives about the past and of loss and discovery that culminate in the discursive articulation of nations and—what is of particular relevance to this book—the vindication of its political leadership and its choices. Empirical data are processed in the light of the form of depth hermeneutics consisting of the following three phases: a.) the analysis of the social-historical-political conditions within which agents act and interact, b.) discursive analysis, and c.) 'interpretation', that is, construction of meaning which explores how dis-

[13] Discourse is seen as comprised of a set of statements and utterances, both limited and repetitive, that possess specific properties; they are unified by common themes, they are marked by repetitiveness (and therefore institutionalised, naturalised, verified). Together they form what discourse theorists call an archive; in other words, a repository of meaning, which is available for construction, reconstruction or mobilisation as the case may be.

course serves to sustain relations of domination.[14] Intertextuality has also been applied; in a broader sense, I investigate how an individual text draws on elements and discourses of other texts (political, scientific, journalistic etc.) and how different texts supplement discourses on specific political domains.

Discourse analysis is not sufficient in itself for analysing the wider social practice, since the latter encompasses both discursive and non-discursive elements. In other words, the nationalist discourse adopted by the BCP can only partly explain the success of the Fatherland Front, while a wider social analysis is needed concerning the communists' hegemonic strategies. Thus, as well as discourse analysis, one needs to take into account economic, social, political, ideological, and cultural parameters, given that the possibility of a specific discourse depends on particular material conditions. Hence, the nationalist discourse of the BCP is seen as a necessary constituent element of its hegemonic strategy and in terms of the material conditions that prevailed in Bulgarian society at a specific time. I attempt historical and political analyses at the outset of each chapter to show the material conditions which allowed the nationalist discourse of the Bulgarian communists and which made this particular discourse possible. Before beginning to analyse and interpret this discourse, we need to trace the path of the communist movement towards Marxist nationalism.

The 'Archaeology' of Marxist Nationalism

The Marxist nationalism of the BCP needs to be seen as part of a more general convergence between Marxism and nationalism. The grounds of this convergence pertain to some classical Marxist theoretical principles and axioms that prevented subsequent Marxist generations from developing a coherent, uniform theory of nationalism and an effective strategy to confront it.[15] At least until the First World War and the October Revolution, the national question was underestimated, since the main categories of classical Marxist thought, such as 'class', 'socialism' 'progress', and 'revolution', were conceived of in universalistic terms. As a result, future generations of Marxists were driven to

[14] Thompson (1984): 10–11.

[15] As Anderson (1991): 3 puts it, "nationalism has been largely elided in Marxist theory, rather than confronted", because "it has proved an uncomfortable anomaly for Marxist theory".

reconcile themselves to nationalism, since they were unable to react, at the theoretical level, to its sweeping influence.

In the writings of Marx and Engels, the national question is rather marginal and of peripheral interest. Even in *Capital*, Marx essentially overlooked the national question and treated colonialism from the point of view of metropolitan countries and the emergence of the global market. Any approach to the national question is barely detectable in their journalistic writings, letters and occasional comments especially after the revolutions of 1848; but still Marx and Engels brought it under what they saw as a more pressing or fundamental political or economic issue (the Irish question to Anglo–Irish landlordism, the Polish to Russian expansionism, and the Indian to British imperialism). Such oversight of a question by prolific intellectuals contrasts with recent literature, i.e. Benner (1995), claiming that Marx and Engels accorded a theoretical conception of nationalism and national identity. In effect, a set of theoretical principles (class reductionism and economic determinism) and tactics (instrumentalism) inclined classical Marxists to keep the dynamics of nationalism out of their theoretical conceptualisation.

To begin with, class reductionism, that is, an over-riding emphasis on the primacy of class, obscured the significance of nationalism. Capitalism, it was suggested, leads to an increasing proletarisation of the middle social strata and the peasantry and then to a clear-cut class confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the proletarised masses. As class-consciousness developed, national consciousness, it was assumed, would wither away. Furthermore, the proletariat along with all classes were conceived of as supra-national; Engels explicitly declared that "the proletarians of all countries have one and the same interest, one and the same enemy, and one and the same struggle".[16] Class reductionism and its outcome, internationalism, envisaged the communist movement, the revolution and communism on a global level. As a consequence, the fundamental classical Marxist vertical division of mankind into classes did not allow for a horizontal division into nations.

Insofar as Marxism is a form of economic determinism, the predominance of economic criterion over any other fostered a set of conceptions that made an autonomous theory of nationalism as a

[16] Engels, *The Festival of Nations in London*, in Marx and Engels (1976): 6.

political phenomenon seem unnecessary. First, the base/superstructure distinction represented nationalism as an epiphenomenon of the capitalist superstructure; after the collapse of capitalism, it was argued, the nation would disappear.[17] Second, the 'stage' theory (from a primitive mode of production, to feudalism, then to capitalism, and finally to socialism) resulted in support for the establishment of large states, which, it was believed, guaranteed the advance of productive forces, a condition that would hasten the advent of a classless society.[18] Yet nationalism 'unmade' large European empires. Third, the idealist conception of 'historyless' people inherited from Hegel, made the potential of some nations to achieve national independence dependent on the presence of a healthy bourgeoisie to rise and advance a capitalist economy; this idea was decisive in the conviction that Slav 'petty, bull-headed nations',[19] for example, were to die. In fact, the late 19th and the 20th century saw the emergence of a number of small states including those of so-called historyless people, such as Bulgaria.

Lastly, the instrumentalist approach to the national question deterred Marxists from constructing a theory of nationalism. Hobsbawm argues that the fundamental criterion of Marxist pragmatic judgement was whether nationalism, or any national movement, advanced the cause of socialism or conversely, how to prevent it from inhibiting its progress; or alternatively, how to mobilise it as a force to assist its progress.[20] A good example of the tactical approach to nationalism can be found in a public speech made by Zinoviev in 1924:

> …we [Bolsheviks] did not admit Ukrainian nationalists into our Party… But we did exploit their discontent for the good of the proletarian revolution… They had been told that after the revolution they would be independent, not that Karl Marx had said that the proletariat had no fatherland.[21]

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[17] Lenin and the Bolsheviks believed that "the future lay with full assimilation of all peoples into one and the emergence of an international culture", cited in Harris (1992): 69.

[18] Marx and Engels sometimes justified overseas colonialism and imperialism on the grounds that it might help backward people to 'be civilised' in economic and technological terms, in Davis (1967): 18–19, and Blaut (1987): 24, 60. For Luxemburg see Davis (1976): 15–21 and Nimni (1991): 50.

[19] Munck (1986): 12 and Connor (1984): 15. Marx stated in *Revolution in China and in Europe (1853)*, that "it would seem as though history had first to make this whole people [the Chinese] drunk before it could rouse them out of their hereditary stupidity", quoted in Davis (1967): 61.

[20] Hobsbawm (1977): 10.

[21] Cited by Degras (1971, vol. 2): 158.

Connor notes that between 1914 and 1924 there are a number of instances in Lenin's writings where he shows how the communists can combat nationalism when necessary and how they can manipulate nationalism whenever possible.[22] Such a tactical approach to the national question caused classical Marxists, such as Luxemburg, to divide national movements into progressive ones, which could accelerate the advent of socialism by improving productive forces,[23] and reactionary 'fruitless national struggle', which could only undermine the 'coherent political struggle of the proletariat'.[24] In this context, the contradiction that the national movement of the same people could be both progressive and reactionary[25] and support of transient Irish independence desirable only to benefit the British proletariat cause of revolution[26] could be interpreted.

The above theoretical principles and tactics meant that up to the First World War, no Marxist developed a systematic and extensive theory on nationalism, leaving, at best, what many have identified as a contradictory legacy on the national question.[27] At the beginning of the 20th century, Marxists wrote a number of treatises on the national question but never launched a major polemic against nationalism as such. This included even Bauer and Stalin.[28] Bauer's main objective was the unity of Social Democracy and the territorial integrity of the Habsburg Empire, which the 'United States of Great Austria' would succeed. His interest was in solving the nationalities problems of the Habsburg Empire by means of extraterritorial national-cultural

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[22] Connor (1984): 30–31.

[23] For instance, movements of Balkan nations under the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the 19th century, in Luxemburg, *The National Question and Autonomy (1908)*, in Davis (1976): 112–114.

[24] "The national liberation of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Ireland…are equally utopian objectives", because they would be bad examples for all the oppressed nations which would demand national liberation with national struggles rather than class struggles, Luxemburg, *The Polish Question at the International Congress (1896)*, in Davis (1976): 57–58.

[25] The Romanians of Bessarabia, who were against Czarist Russia, were considered by Marx revolutionary people, whereas those of Transylvania were called the reactionary mercenaries of the Habsburgs, cited in Seton-Watson (1977): 446.

[26] After the British revolution the 'potato–eating children of nature', as Marx called the Irish people, cited in Connor (1984): 15, would be incorporated into a socialist, multinational Britain.

[27] Munck (1986): 9 and 20 ff, Davis (1967): 79, and Debray (1977): 31–32.

[28] *The Nationality Question and Social Democracy* (1907) of Bauer; *How does Social Democracy Understand the National Question* (1904) and *Marxism and the National Question* (1913) of Stalin.

autonomy in order to promote Austrian socialism, rather than countering nationalism. On Lenin's instructions, Stalin wrote his treatise on the national question for polemical purposes against 'cultural national autonomy' and organisational autonomy within the socialist movement as the Bolsheviks were for a centralised and well-disciplined organisation. Significantly, in his treatise, instead of confronting nationalism, Stalin contented himself with defining the nation.

The political and historical situation at the turn of the century set significant theoretical and practical exigencies for Marxists. The October Revolution, in particular, breaking out in a non-advanced industrial country, where a proletariat hardly existed, caused a great rupture in the classical Marxist imagery of 'scientific socialism' that socialism is guaranteed by historically given and inevitable laws. It was also believed that the universality of the market would abolish national barriers; capitalism and the bourgeoisie would accelerate marginalisation of the national economy and, therefore, the nation; and the proletariat would unite and its international revolution would triumph. In fact, national aspirations appear to have actually strengthened national barriers and, in some cases, enforced new frontiers; a world war was to break out but between nations and not classes. In the First World War, instead of joining their fellow proletarians all over the world in a revolution against the bourgeoisie, workers followed their own national bourgeoisie into a war against the proletarians of other nations. Socialists defended their fatherland and the Second International dissolved. Furthermore, within the Second International, the practice of internationalism was itself flawed, since trade unions had been 'nationalised' and the Social Democratic parties had been established at a national level.[29] Instead of promoting the amalgamation of all nations, internationalism was being organised on a national, non-internationalist basis. By and large, nation triumphed over class and nationalism overrode internationalism.

The nationalist World War and the outbreak of Revolution in a country with acute national questions demonstrated the centrality of nationalism in political life at the beginning of the 20th century. As Munck argues, Lenin and the Bolsheviks now "recognised for the first time in Marxist discourse the 'relative autonomy' of the national question".[30] At the time, however, Lenin and the Bolsheviks could not

[29] Der Linden (1988): 335.
[30] Munck (1986): 76.

turn to an existing set of theoretical tools from the Marxist tradition to conceptualise and confront nationalism. Consequently, when they needed ideological tools to attract the masses, they did not hesitate to compromise with nationalism and seek to integrate it into their own view. Luxemburg, in the long term, proved prophetic when she said that if Marxism adopted nationalism,[31] it would downplay [or, rather, mutate, as we shall see] class struggle, socialism, and of course, internationalism.

Lenin introduced three theoretical innovations of national significance: the right of nations to self-determination, the anti-imperialist idea, and the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. The right of nations to self-determination and secession recognised any national movement claiming independence and any nation claiming itself as such. Hence, the Bolsheviks had effectively exalted a nationalist slogan in communist politics to the epicentre of revolutionary discourse, despite the fact that they laid this right in the Party and the state bureaucracy in a tactical manner and were never to apply it themselves.[32] Inside the USSR the right of nations to self-determination aimed both to attack Czarism and, after the revolution, to help underpin the survival of the Soviet Union. Outside the USSR, the anti-imperialist idea aimed to win over international allies, that is, anti-imperialist and national liberation movements, and to break the chain of capitalism at its weakest link, that is the colonised people of the East. It was thought that the proletariat would lead the fight against national oppression and transform the national liberation revolution into a socialist one. Insofar as the slogan of national self-determination could support the Revolution and the Soviet Union, the communists would advance it promoting, at the same time, nationalism. Opposition to the Leninist approach to national self-determination led by Luxemburg[33] outside the Bolshevik party, and Pyatakov and Bukharin

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[31] "In the imperialist environment… it was either patriotism or class struggle, either imperialism or socialism", cited by Davis (1967): 91.

[32] A decision of secession was never taken in the history of the Soviet Union with the exception of the cases of the Baltic States, because at the time Lenin and the Bolsheviks had no alternative. The Soviet constitutions of 1924, 1936 and 1977 possessed the right to secede, whereas there were a lot of political prisoners condemned because of separatist, 'anti-state' activities. The Bolsheviks, in effect, did nothing to prevent the military intervention in Ukraine, Armenia and Turkestan; the forcible incorporation of Bashkiria into the RSFSR; the annexation of Bokhara and Khiva; or the tightening of Russian control over Outer Mongolia.

[33] Luxemburg, *The National Question and Autonomy 1908*, in Davis (1976): 103–104, 140, and 279–280. She deprecates self-determination: "the 'right' of nation to

within, argued that the fictitious, utopian, harmful, and illusionary slogan of self-determination would soon be obsolete.

The Leninist theory of imperialism[34] was originally formulated as an analysis of monopolist capitalism at the dawn of the 20th century. However, in this context, Lenin put forward the concept of 'revolutionary nationalist' movements, as national liberation movements in backward countries were seen to be a part of the struggle for socialism. Hence, Bolshevik politics "had to bring a close alliance of all national and colonial liberation movements with Soviet Russia", while "all communist parties [had to] support with deeds revolutionary liberation movement[s]".[35] The anti-imperialist idea essentially distinguished the national bourgeoisie, which was imposed by the needs of foreign capital and presented as the 'lackeys of imperialists', from the nation, which was substantially disenfranchised by colonialism. Within the framework of anti-imperialist theory, Lenin underlined "the division of nations into oppressor and oppressed as basic, significant and inevitable under imperialism".[36] Slezkine has characterised this distinction as an early defence of nationalism by Lenin and Stalin.[37] By this premise, the notion of exploitation is displaced from class to nation and changed into national domination. Indeed, Lenin developed a stratification of nations similar to the social one: the imperialist powers could be seen as the capitalists, nations struggling for national self-determination and semi-colonies as middle classes, and colonies as the proletariat.[38]

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freedom… under existing social conditions, (is) only worth as much as the 'right' of each man to eat off gold plates, which, as Nikolay Chernyshevsky wrote, he would be ready to sell at any moment for a ruble", ibid., 122–123.

[34] Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (1917) and Preface to the French and German edition (1920),* in Lenin (1970[3]). This treatise analyses imperialism in a pure economic manner; Lenin noted that "we are interested in the *economic* aspect of the question, which Kautsky *himself* introduced into *his* definition" p. 108 (italics as in the original). Lenin, however, reckons that the "national question… is extremely important in itself as well as in its relation to imperialism" p. 108.

[35] *Theses on the National and Colonial Question Adopted by the Second Congress (July 1920)*, written by Lenin, in Degras (1971, vol. 1): 131 ff.

[36] Lenin, *The Socialist Revolution and the Rights of Nations to Self-determination (Theses) (April 1917)*, in Lenin (1969): 160.

[37] Slezkine (1996): 206.

[38] Lenin, *The Socialist Revolution and the Rights of Nations to Self-determination (Theses) (April 1917)*, in Lenin (1969): 163–164. Similar categories are drawn in Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism (1924)* in Bruce (1973): 150.

Domestic Soviet politics and Stalinism also elevated nationalism. The policy of 'korenizatsiya' (indigenisation)[39] sought exclusively to create national elites at the republican level and below; interestingly, it witnessed an endless process of determining dialects, languages and ethnicities and attributed an enhanced role to ethnographers and linguists. As Martin demonstrates,[40] 'korenizatsiya' originally aimed to disarm nationalism by satisfying nationalist demands and ideals of nationalities and ethnicities of the USSR and to strike a heavy blow against 'Great-Russian chauvinism'. Slezkine points out that the 'Great Transformation' of 1928–1932 "turned into the most extravagant celebration of ethnic diversity that any state had ever financed",[41] although, by 1933, the Soviet leadership had believed that 'korenizatsiya' was exacerbating rather than disarming nationalism.[42] At that time, the Soviet leadership turned to 'Russification', sanctioning Russian self-expression and nationalism. In this way, the Bolsheviks transferred the epicentre of nationalism from the Republics to the centre. Russification, however, did not mean annulment of the policies of 'korenizatsiya', as now only a few full-fledged, fully equipped nations who had their own republics and their own bureaucracies could build up national cultures.[43] Apparently, Stalin's paradox constituted his attempt to disarm one kind of nationalism with another; either way, nationalism was always present.

The development of the Stalinist doctrine of 'socialism in one country' had three outcomes for the symbiosis of Marxism with nationalism. In this context, first, it broke with internationalism. Paradoxically, the proletariat, by its nature an international class, gained a socialist fatherland, limited to the boundaries of the USSR. Second, as all the communist parties were obliged to support the Soviet Union, the Comintern, by its nature an international organisation, became substantially the instrument of the USSR. Third, in arguing that revolution could occur in different times and places, it located revolutionary possibilities inside a national rather than an international space. During the era of imperialism, as Stalin argued, "the victory of the prole-

[39] Korenizatsiya involved the promotion of national territories, elites, languages, and cultures for all Soviet nationalities regardless of their size, their level of development, or the strength of their national movement.
[40] Martin (2001): 181.
[41] Slezkine (1996): 203.
[42] Martin (2001):303.
[43] Slezkine (1996): 223–225.

tariat in individual countries" is both possible and indeed necessary[44] and that for this to happen, national peculiarities had to be taken into account (although of course it was still for the Comintern to evaluate what the possibilities were in any case). This implied that revolution was to some extent a national issue and that socialism would be built separately in each nation.

During the 1930s, nationalism started to gain ground in the Soviet Union. From being the 'country of the proletarian dictatorship' and the 'motherland of socialism' the USSR became simply 'our motherland'.[45] A Russocentric thousand-year narrative was established in official historiography, while movies of the majestic Russian past, such as S. M. Eisenstein's 'Alexander Nevsky' and V. Petrov's 'Peter the First', were shown and promoted by the state. During the 'Great *Patriotic*[46] War', nationalism reached its peak. The old anthem of the Soviet Union, the anthem of the Labour movement of the world, was replaced by a new, patriotic and Russocentric one.[47] A new Slavophile movement was sponsored.[48] Strikingly, Stalin, in his speech of 7 November 1941 in front of the Lenin mausoleum, in an ultimate attempt to exalt the Soviet people, appealed to Russian heroes (including Alexander Nevsky, Dimitry Ronskoy, Kuzma Minin, Dmitry Pozharsky, Alexander Suvorov, and Mikhail Kutuzov). He tried to recall Russian historical memories (the so-called 'Russian Patriotic War' against Napoleon for the freedom of all people).[49] With all these events, the symbiosis of Marxism and nationalism in the Soviet Union was accomplished.

With regard to the international Marxist institution of the inter-war period, Comintern, there was a process from the internationalist First

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[44] Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism (1924),* cited in Bruce (1973): 119.

[45] According to the commentator of 'Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik', Vera Alexandrova, (1939–1940) "…at first, one was to speak of the USSR as the 'country of the proletarian dictatorship', and then the 'motherland of socialism'…During the 'socialism in one country' construction period, the USSR was referred to officially as the 'socialist motherland'. Towards the end of the first five-year plan…'socialist or soviet motherland', while today…as simply 'our motherland'…less official and bureaucratic", in Brandenberger (2000): 401.

[46] Italics are mine.

[47] Deutscher (1967): 491. It began with the following words: "An indestructible union of free republics *Great Russia* has rallied for ever" (italics in Deutscher).

[48] Deutscher (1967): 492. A Congress of Slavic peoples opened in Moscow in May 1943.

[49] Ulam (1974): 556–557 and Deutscher (1967): 463–468. Molotov had already done the same in his June 22, 1941 address, in Brandenberger (2000): 405.

Congress (1919), which put international revolution above all,[50] to the reconciliation of Marxism with nationalism at the Seventh Congress (1935), when the phrase 'world revolution' scarcely appeared in Dimtrov's long report. Indeed, as we shall see in the following pages, the intoxicating optimism for world revolution and internationalism of the First Congress gradually gave ground to nationally-oriented discourses and tactics. A spectre was haunting the international communist movement during the Comintern years: the spectre of nationalism.

During the 1920s, a series of episodes heralded the forthcoming marriage of nationalism and Marxism. First, the theses on the national and colonial questions, adopted by the Second Congress (1920), encouraged the CCP to forge an alliance with the nationalist Guomindang, as it was calculated that China was on the threshold of a national revolution against imperialism and warlordism and the communists had to aid the anti-imperialist force.[51] Second, in 1923, under the doctrine of 'national Bolshevism', the KPD sought alliance with the ultra-nationalist right-wing as part of a united-front-from-below project. Indeed, there were talks between the KDP and the Nazis as well as a joint pamphlet on the Schlageter issue.[52] Radek declared that the KPD was the only force that "could bring salvation and freedom to the entire German people",[53] because Germany was thought of as a 'semi-colony', and anti-imperialist tactics were therefore appropriate—the creation of a coalition of forces to win national independence.[54] But even long after the early 1920s, when the 'class-against-class' Comintern line had been adopted, the KPD adopted the line of 'national and social liberation' (1930) and the twelfth ECCI (1932) suggested that nationalist aims could not be excluded from the KPD programme, which demanded "a worker-peasant republic, i.e. a Soviet Socialist Germany, guaranteeing

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[50] *Platform of the Communist International Adopted by the First Congress (March 1919)*, drafted by Bukharin, in Degras (1971, vol. 1): 18 and *Manifesto of the Communist International to the Proletariat of the Entire World (March 1919)*, written by Trotsky, in Degras (1971, vol. 1): 38.

[51] Weiner (1996): 163–179 and Smith S. (1998): 256.

[52] For the 'Schlageter case' see Harman (1982): 252 ff. and McDermott and Agnew (1996): 36–37. Radek praised Schlageter as a "martyr of German nationalism", cited in Mevius (2005): 18.

[53] McDermott and Agnew (1996): 36.

[54] Radek declared: "Today, national Bolshevism means that everyone is penetrated with the feeling that salvation can be found only with the communists… The strong emphasis on the nation in Germany is a revolutionary act, like the emphasis on the nation in the colonies", cited in Harris (1992): 125. Radek himself had bitterly denounced national Bolshevism in 1919, Harman (1982): 253.

the voluntary adhesion of the people of Austria and other German regions".[55] Indeed, at the time, the success of the appeal of nationalism in German society and the dynamics of Nazism acted as a catalyst to KPD's declarations of the unification of all German-speaking territories within a future Soviet Germany.

Although the significance and dynamics of the national question had been exalted since the 1920s, the Seventh Congress (1935) constituted a landmark in the emergence of Marxist nationalism. There, Dimitrov introduced a national discourse in several ways. Having cited an excerpt from Lenin's article "On the national pride of the Great Russians", Dimitrov first argued that "communists are not believers in national nihilism", and that "they do not ridicule all national feeling of the broad working masses".[56] Second, he elaborated the Manichean pattern of the polar concepts of chauvinism versus patriotism. A sense of 'good' nationalism, patriotism or "the nationalism of us, the Communists" opposed 'bad' nationalism, chauvinism or rather fascism. Thus, communist patriotism, which implied real and genuine love of the fatherland, was in contrast to bourgeois nationalism, which was militarist and expansionist regarding neighbouring countries, and, most crucially, servile to the imperialist interests of the Great Powers. Lastly, Dimitrov stated that the communists had to combat the fascist falsification of the history of the people in every way, as fascists were representing themselves as the heirs to all that was exalted and heroic in the past of every nation. The Bulgarian fascists had, for instance, made use of the national liberation movement of the 1870s and its heroes (Vasil Levski, Stefan Karadzha and others). The communists had to enlighten the working masses about the past of their own people in "a historically correct fashion", in the "true spirit of Lenin and Stalin", so as "to link their present struggle with the revolutionary traditions of the past".[57] A new historical narrative was to be written, which would reveal the revolutionary and glorious past of the nation.

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[55] Carr (1983): 73.

[56] Carr (1983): 406.

[57] *Extracts from the Resolution of the Seventh Comintern Congress on Fascism, working-class unity, and the Tasks of the Comintern (August 1935)*, in Degras (1971, vol. 3): 366. See, also, Dimitrov, *The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism (Report before the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, delivered on August 2, 1935),* in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 70–71.

As well as reports drafted by Dimitrov at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the whole strategy of People's Fronts advanced the symbiosis of Marxism and nationalism within the communist movement. Despite the objections of the so-called fundamentalists (Piatnitsky, Kun, Lozovsky, Knorin), the People's Front strategy,[58] proposed by Dimitrov, Thorez, and Togliatti, was made feasible by virtue of the 'triple interaction' between national factors (e.g. the successful political front established by the PCF in 1934), the internal dynamics of the Comintern leadership (assumed by Dimitrov, the hero of the Leipzig trial) and the shifting requirements in domestic and foreign Soviet policy (the Soviet quest for security from Nazi Germany), bringing about a relative liberalisation in Soviet-Comintern relations.[59] People's Front strategy did not contradict Soviet foreign interests, since it fostered collective security with the Western democracies and could favour the formation of an allied front against fascist Germany.

People's Fronts would broaden political, popular and national goals in order to win over allies for the communists. Claudin maintains that, for this political purpose, the communists were to propose a political platform as the basis for a popular front, which had to guarantee the fundamental liberties of the people and exclude excessively radical aims that might 'frighten off' politically undeveloped sections of the population[60] and potential political allies. As the Secretariat of the Comintern declared in August 1942, possibly under Dimitrov's direction, 'Fatherland Front', 'National Front', 'Anti-Hitlerist Front'[61] could gather together all 'national anti-Hitlerist forces'.[62] The ultimate aim, as Dimitrov made palpably clear, remained Soviet power;[63] however, communism and Sovietisation could not constitute the basis of common political platforms. Hence, without completely breaking with Leninist and Stalinist tradition, communist parties put aside overtly communist discourses; the path was clear for an ideology deeply-entrenched in European societies able to attract political allies as

[58] It was ratified by the Seventh Congress (August 1935); though a letter of Dimitrov to the Politburo of the CPSU (1 July 1934) had paved the way for it.

[59] As McDermott and Agnew (1996): 125 have shown, Stalin gave Dimitrov almost carte-blanche to experiment, provided that Dimitrov did not question the disastrous Stalinist tactics of the previous period.

[60] Claudin (1975): 193.

[61] Nevertheless, no Front with this name was established. All Fronts opted for nationally-oriented varieties.

[62] Daskalov (1989): 80.

[63] McDermott and Agnew (1996): 132.

well as the masses, that is, nationalism, which would become a core discourse in future communist hegemonic strategies. The tactic of building political alliances on a national basis charted by the Seventh Congress was to prove efficient in each partisan movement. The pre-war idea for a broad anti-fascist coalition substantially materialised in the resistance movement of all anti-fascist, fatherland or national or patriotic fronts.

Within the overall strategy of the popular front, a set of tactics link Marxism and nationalism. First, national peculiarities had to be taken into account regarding the struggle of the working class in each country and the political context for forming the coalition between the communist party and other democratic forces. Second, through the People's Front of each country, since they were national units, the communist parties presented themselves as the representative of the social and national interests of the people. Within this framework, the concepts of the people and the nation would be conflated, while the proletariat would cease to constitute a distinct discursive unit. Third, by virtue of the anti-fascist struggle, internationalism now involved a significant amount of nationalism: to accomplish their internationalist duty, communists had to defend their nation against a pro-fascist government and, of course, against a fascist attack, and they had the opportunity to identify the ruling classes with the national enemy.[64] Hobsbawm argues that anti-fascist nationalism made victory and social transformation inseparable;[65] therefore, it could be claimed that as social transformation would be the product of national liberation, the communists were liberating the nation by transforming it or transforming the nation by liberating it.

Lastly, popular front tactics created a synthesis of social revolution and patriotic emotions, intermingling symbols, slogans, and figures of both the communist and nationalist realm.[66] The French People's

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[64] In a declaration of 1938, the Comintern appealed to all workers for the replacement of "the governments of *national* treachery…by governments…ready to repulse *fascist* aggressors" (Italics added). *Extracts from an ECCI manifesto on the Anniversary of the Russian (sic) Revolution (November 1938)*, in Degras (1971, vol. 3): 432.

[65] Hobsbawm (1993): 145–148.

[66] The French People's Front declaration is revealing: "Eternal France presided over this now historic day: Joan of Arc and 1789, the Marseillaise and the Internationale", cited in Claudin (1975): 182. Likewise, in his speech at the Seventh Congress, the Italian Communist, Grieco, stressed in the same patriotic tone, that "precisely because we [Italians] are the heirs of great patriots like Garibaldi, we are against all imperialist wars and against all oppression of other people", cited in Carr (1983): 409. Lastly, the American

Front provides a revealing example. On the centenary of the composer of 'La Marseillaise', Rouget de Lisle's, death, Maurice Thorez took the opportunity to say: "…to the mingled strains of La Marseillaise and L' Internationale, wrapped in the reconciled folds of the tricolour and the red flag, we shall build a free, strong, and happy future". Afterwards, La Marseillaise would be frequently sung by the resistance movement.[67] Elsewhere, communists presented themselves as tribune of indigenous radical-democratic heritage: Chartism in the UK, Washington idealism in the USA, anti-Napoleonic liberalism in Spain, and Hussite egalitarianism in Czechoslovakia. Thanks to this synthesis of social revolution and patriotic emotions, especially during the Second World War, popular front tactics showed the communists in the most sincere anti-fascist light and, thus, the communist parties achieved considerable successes.

Even in the late 1930s, when the popular front strategy that marked a significant turn of the international communist movement to nationalism had ebbed, leading communist figures of the CPGB, such as Pollit, and the KPB displayed patriotic inclinations, renouncing, in essence, the Moscow line of defining the war as imperialist and unjust. They called for the defence of national independence and freedom and declared that communists should stand in the front ranks in case of a Nazi attack on their country.[68] During the Civil War (1936–1939), Spanish communists seeking unity within the republican camp, mass mobilisation, and, above all, a common leadership of the Republican front under the PCE, made patriotic appeals; they presented the conflict as a *national-revolutionary* war of independence and social liberation waged on a foreign invader.[69] But, even before the volte-face in Comintern strategy marked by the Nazi invasion of the USSR, the ECCI itself issued the nationalistic declaration that "we, French communists…will fight decisively and fiercely against the enslavement of our nation by foreign imperialists".[70] Soon after, Greek and Yugoslav communists would passionately defend their fatherland against Tripartite Pact aggression. In such cases, national discourses appear to

communists fashioned the following formulation: Washington-Jefferson-Lincoln-Browder, the last being the leader of the CPUSA, in Rees and Thorpe (1998): 7.

[67] Vovelle (1998): 69–70.

[68] McDermott and Agnew (1996): 195 and 197.

[69] Nùñez and Faraldo (2009).

[70] It was issued in the name of the PCF on 19 June 1940, cited in McDermott and Agnew (1996): 201.

have escaped their theoretical and strategical framework and taken root in communist political culture.

As Hobsbawm stated,[71] in the mid-1930s and the Second World War, the communist movement deliberately broke with the tradition of relinquishing symbols of patriotism to bourgeois states and petty-bourgeois politicians. Ironically, even the liquidation of the Comintern had inter alia a nationalist interpretation:

> …the dissolution of the Comintern…facilitates the work of *patriots* of all countries for uniting the progressive forces of *their respective countries* regardless of party or religious faith, into a single camp of *national liberation*.[72]

A long time had passed since Zinoviev's clear-cut declaration that the communists simply exploited nationalism for short-term political considerations. Now the communists believed that they represented national interests. They demonstrated that they were fighting for national independence and freedom. The communist movement brandished national and communist flags side by side and combined democratic slogans with national ones.

The 'intoxicating optimism' induced by the October Revolution had, since the beginning of the century, turned to frustration due to the failure to expand the revolution abroad. During the inter-war years, furthermore, the international communist movement had suffered defeats (the 'March Action' in 1921, the 'German October' in 1923, and the collapse of Bela Kun's Soviet Republic in Hungary in 1919); seen its influence and popularity plummet during the class-against-class era;[73] had to operate underground since communist parties in many European countries were banned; and, most importantly, had to compete with the dynamics of fascism, which had gained significant popularity among the masses and threatened the very existence of the Soviet Union. This crisis channelled the efforts of the international communist movement into seeking an ideology attractive to the masses and conducive to negotiations and co-operation with other political forces, that is, nationalism. In this context, popular fronts proved an impressively successful strategy: the PCF grew from 86,000

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[71] Hobsbawm (1993): 145–148.

[72] *Resolution of the ECCI Presidium recommending the Dissolution of the Comintern (May 1943)*, in Degras (1971, vol. 3): 476–479.

[73] The largest sections of the Comintern, that is, the PCF and the KSČ, had barely 30,000 members at the end of 1933.

members in 1935 to 328,000 in September 1937.[74] Moreover, nationalism could provide communist parties with a 'language in common' with the broadest strata, help them to become a hegemonic force by maximising the audience for their political slogans, and transform them from small cadres into massive parties. After the PCI became a 'new party', as Togliatti declared,[75] its membership increased dramatically from 5,000 in July 1943 to 1,676,000 by the end of 1945. We will now turn our attention to regional dynamics, to the BCP and to the particular version of 'Marxist nationalism' that it adopted as a part of the international communist movement and as a section of the Comintern. We shall make comparisons with other communist parties, mainly of Eastern Europe, as we suggest that the BCP was not unique in following this path.

[74] Rees and Thorpe (1998): 6.
[75] Allum and Sassoon (1977): 173.

CHAPTER ONE

MARXIST NATIONALISM AS EVOLVED BY THE BCP UP TO 1944

The BCP was a Marxist institution that affiliated itself with the Comintern, while its acknowledged leader from the mid-1930s onwards, Georgi Dimitrov, was the fundamental exponent of People's Front strategy, adopted by the Bulgarian communists since 1936. As the recognition of the 'relative autonomy' of the national question and of the dynamics of nationalism had affected the international communist movement, the regional dynamics of nationalism could not leave communist discourses and politics intact. Undoubtedly, the BCP operated in a society where nationalism was well-entrenched and disseminated by such powerful apparatuses as the schools, the army, and official propaganda, while Marxism was usually a clandestine ideology. Indeed, nationalism had become common sense, that is, the uncritical and largely subconscious manner in which people perceive the world, in a 'banal and hot' way.[1] Both forms of nationalism can be identified in Bulgaria during the first half of the 20th century, when she participated in two Balkan wars and two world wars and experienced nationalist discourses and rituals. As we shall see, not only did the right and the ultra-right-wing articulate nationalist discourses but left-wing political agents, such as the *Bulgarian Agrarian National Union* (BANU) and the BCP (though the latter only after the predominance of the 'Muscovites' and the adoption of popular front tactics in the mid-1930s), defined and expressed Bulgaria's national aspirations and demands and pursued her national interests, as they envisaged them.[2]

To begin with, Stambolov's regime in the late 1880s and early 1890s carved a nationalistic path by applying a project of ethnic homogenisation in Bulgaria; by strengthening Bulgarian culture inside and outside the country; and by encouraging Bulgarian nationalism in

[1] For concepts such as 'hot and banal nationalism', see Billig (1995): 43–46.

[2] Since it is quite difficult to explore the minds of ordinary peasants and working people, we will focus here on discourses articulated by the leadership of parties that claimed to represent them.

Macedonia.[3] It could be argued that the Bulgarian aggression which came to fore many times up to the Second World War was formulated in Stambolov's era. Later, during the Balkan Wars and the First World War, the Bulgarian state mobilised all social strata (including the peasantry) to fight for the 'unity of the Bulgarian nation' within one state. As a result, militaristic nationalism, irredentism, aggressiveness and expansionism (what the communists would later call 'Great-Bulgarian chauvinism') loomed large up to 1918. Nevertheless, within a political framework favourable to war and annexation, left-wing political movements articulated and developed anti-war discourses. First and foremost, the communists were against the war. They voted against the war credits;[4] put peace above all;[5] and propagated class war against the war prepared by the capitalists and an uncompromised struggle against capitalism, imperialism, and militarism.[6] Like the communists, the Agrarians rejected militarism and imperialism and propagated disarmament, arguing that Bulgaria could never achieve her nationalistic goals, notably acquiring Macedonia and regaining the Dobrudzha from Romania, by any other than peaceful means.[7] It should be noted that the Agrarians never developed a systematic, extensive and ambitious nationalism. This was due to their ideology that society was divided into estates, of which the peasantry was the largest and most influential. They had conceived of a society consisting of diverse estates that competed with each other; thus, national unity seemed to be scarcely integrated into their discourse. On the contrary, as we shall see, despite their class worldview the communists would articulate an extensive nationalism because of the all-embracing totalitarian project they would deploy.

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[3] Perry (1993); Crampton (1983): 129–150 *passim*.

[4] Blagoev sharply criticised the German Social-Democratic Party for having voted in favour of the war credits and for having involved the proletariat in the war, without consideration of the 'international proletarian solidarity'; Blagoev, *Magister Dixii (1915)*, in Blagoev (1976): 313.

[5] Blagoev, *Peace 1913,* in Blagoev (1976): 295–298.

[6] Blagoev, *War against war 1912*, in Blagoev (1976): 288–290. Kolarov underlined that the Bulgarian communists were "remaining true to [their] first stand against the war…down with the war, [they] want peace among the Balkan peoples, peace among all nations"; Kolarov, *Against the war credits, against war, for peace, speech delivered on 15 July 1916 in the National Assembly*, in Kolarov (1978): 52.

[7] In his reply to Czar Ferdinand's speech in 1914, Stamboliski underlined that "we will suffer to protect Bulgaria from this terrible danger [the war]…we will not live to see the shame and doom of Bulgaria"; cited in Bell (1977): 85.

At the beginning of the 20th century, what we might call the native dialect of Bulgarian social life involved a 'syndrome of the lost territories of San Stefano'; a discourse on 'unredeemed lands'; discourses on the uprooting and 'refugisation' of the Bulgarian element; and discourses about national injustices and national ideals. At the end of the First World War, militaristic nationalism, irredentism, expansionism, war and annexation experienced total failure. Nevertheless, this did not result in any loss of affection for the fatherland. The concept of 'national disasters', which would become central in the discourse of the BCP after the Second World War, became predominant. It implied the national/territorial contraction of Bulgaria, economic collapse, misery and poverty for the people, while castigating the warmonger policies of Czar Ferdinand in the Balkan Wars and the First World War. The impact of this concept on Bulgarian society was very significant. After the First World War, all political parties blamed for national disasters sank in the elections, were founded anew under different names, and merged with each other to stave off the danger of disappearing from the political stage.[8] Apparently, national discourses in Bulgarian society completely altered; yet nationalism remained still present.

In an atmosphere of 'national disaster', the Agrarians formed a government in 1919 in the name of the country's salvation,[9] as the communists would do in the aftermath of the Second World War. They followed a foreign policy focused on international co-operation, peace, the reduction of army expenditure, and the elimination of the role of military officers in politics.[10] Nevertheless, the Agrarian government did not neglect to represent Bulgaria's national interests and ideals and deployed a national policy, which they considered to be to her genuine benefit. At the epicentre of the Agrarian government's national goals was the vision of a Bulgaria independent of any foreign intervention through modernisation, economic growth and development;[11] for instance, Bulgaria resisted Italian plans for domination in the Balkans. Within this framework, Bulgaria did not eschew nationalistic goals; at Peace Treaty conferences and in visits to many European countries,

[8] Tzvetkov (1993, vol. 2): 162 and Kumanov (1991): 58–60. The slogan of 'national disasters' was so effective that even in 1922, in a referendum held by the BANU, 70% of the Bulgarians voted for the trial of culprits for national disasters, who had not been tried in 1919; Tzvetkov (1993, vol. 2): 165 and Kumanov (1991): 63.

[9] At the time of the Radomir rebellion, in Bell (1977): 136.

[10] Stavrianos (2000²): 648. See, also, Bell (1977): 161 and 184–186.

[11] Gallagher (2001): 96–99 and Bell (1977): 184–186.

Stamboliski and the Agrarians claimed an outlet to the Aegean Sea in an autonomous Western Thrace, the protection of minority Bulgarians' rights in the territories that Bulgaria had lost, and the reduction of war reparations.[12]

The Agrarian government was overthrown by a coup plotted and organised by military officers and opposition parties in June 1923. The *Military League* legitimised this coup on the grounds that the Agrarians had committed national treason and a resolute force was desperately needed to save Bulgaria.[13] In September 1923, the communists attempted an uprising, which failed totally, and in 1925 they tried to assassinate Czar Boris. All these events caused the Tsankovist regime to make a fierce attack on the Left, which was finally substantially decimated.[14] Since parties were abolished, peasants and working people lost contact with the progressive movements of Bulgaria and remained exposed to Tsankov's governmental fascist propaganda.[15] At the time that ultra-nationalism was gaining momentum, the Macedonian question (which had already acquired a tremendous appeal to Bulgarian society due to the hundreds of thousands of Macedonian refugees living in Bulgaria) came dramatically to the fore. In 1923–1924, the *Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation* (IMRO), a sizeable paramilitary terrorist organisation that had become 'a state within a state' in Pirin, seemed to have reached its apogee. Earlier, Stamboliski had cracked down on Macedonian extremists to ease rapprochement with Yugoslavia and signed the Nis Convention, which precipitated common action by both states against IMRO militants. Nevertheless, the BANU would opt for an autonomous Macedonia and was interested in the rights of the Bulgarian population which, as was claimed, lived in those parts of Macedonia that Yugoslavia and Greece had occupied.[16] Following a different policy on the Macedonian question, the communists, as we shall see, went further by negotiating with the *IMRO* and finally forming the pro-communist faction of *IMRO (United)*.

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[12] Sharlanov (1987): 4–7 and Bell (1977): 184–207 *passim*.

[13] Bell (1977): 209.

[14] Bell (1977): 244–245 speaks about 16,000 Agrarians and communists who were killed between 1923 and 1925.

[15] Tsankovists and other participants in the government of National Entente openly declared themselves as fascists, emulated Mussolini's tactics, and embellished his ideas; Bell (1977): 212–213.

[16] Sharlanov (1987): 11–15.

In the 1930s, nationalism still gained ground in Bulgarian society and revisionism towards the Versailles Treaty culminated. Significantly, the *National Social Movement* of the fascist coup-plotter Tsankov gained 10–12% of the vote in the municipal elections of 1932 and the parliamentary elections of 1934, despite the fact that it had only been founded in 1932. Since the mid-1930s the ruling ideology had been identified with nationalism; since 1934 secondary school education had been totally infiltrated by nationalism; and fascist organisations, such as *Ratniks*, *Legionaries*, and *Otets Paisii* had a serious presence and success in schools.[17] Moreover, books and essays were published which followed a markedly primordialist and nationalist approach and stressed the organic unfolding of the nation in time, 'national unity', irredentism and 'unification of all Bulgarian lands', originality and special historical mission, and the 'genius or the spirit of the nation'.[18]

1.1 *Regional Dynamics and the BCP Before and During World War Two*

The BCP was, of course, located within the Comintern, where the particular accommodation of nationalism to Marxism took place. As a section of this Marxist organisational and institutional domain, it adopted the Comintern's resolutions with regard to regional issues and followed its paths: from the initial optimism about the imminent revolution to the united-front-from-below tactics to the class-against-class era and, finally, to the popular front. Upon the establishment of the Comintern, the communist parties had to apply the fundamental Leninist principle of the right of nations to self-determination or even secession, while Bolshevik politics "had to bring a close alliance of all national and colonial liberation movements with Soviet Russia".[19] Within this framework, the communist parties were intent on being hailed as champions of—real or imagined—national minorities, thus incorporating liberation movements in order to exploit minority grievances. With regard to the Balkans, it was argued that a federation of the Balkan people or the South Slavs following the Soviet paradigm would bring about the national liberation of the Macedonians,

[17] Shopov (1975) *passim*.
[18] Daskalov (2004): 15–16.
[19] *Theses on the National and Colonial Question Adopted by the Second Congress (July 1920)*, written by Lenin, in Degras (1971, vol. 1): 131 ff.

the Croatians, the Dobroudzhans, the Thracians, the Albanians, the Bessarabians and any other oppressed ethnic group.[20]

In this context, the *Balkan Communist Federation* was formed in 1920 and soon made the Macedonian question a top priority. The slogan of an independent Macedonia and Thrace would, the Comintern thought, bring minority organisations, such as *IMRO*, into alliance with the communists[21] and facilitate the formation of a revolutionary united front, which would destabilise the Balkan monarchies and co-operate with the Soviet Union. The slogan of an independent and unified Macedonia could, it was calculated, win the hundreds of thousands of Macedonian refugees from Greece and Yugoslavia. The Comintern policy on the Macedonian question caused dismay in the KKE and the CPY, even though they compromised on the slogan of a united and independent Macedonia at the 5th Conference of the *Balkan Communist Federation* (1923).[22] At this time the Bulgarian communists managed to enjoy Soviet backing and to lead the *Balkan Communist Federation*. This was because the BCP had proved loyal to the Comintern policy in the Balkans, as this policy caused no debates within the BCP but rather could advance its popularity, winning over the bulk of the Macedonian refugees and a potential ally, that is the IMRO. Moreover, the BCP was by far the strongest Balkan communist party[23] and had an acknowledged Marxist tradition due to Blagoev's writings and activities.

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[20] *Extracts from the Resolution of the Fifth Comintern Congress on the Report of the ECCI (1924),* in Degras (1971): 106; Dimitrov, *A Socialist Balkan Conference (Inprekor #43, 08.04.1924),* in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 198; Dimitrov, *The October Revolution and the Balkans (International Press Correspondence #114, 18.11.1927)*, ibid., 273–279 *passim*; and Dimitrov, *Imperialism in the Balkans (La Federation Balkanique, 15.07.1929),* ibid., 310.

[21] There were deliberations between the IMRO leadership and Soviet officials in 1923 which resulted in a short-lived common manifesto. The pro-communist left-wing of the IMRO soon split and formed the IMRO (United) but never gained considerable popularity. The IMRO (United) strictly followed the Comintern policy on the Macedonian question and designated future Macedonian political figures, such as Vlachov.

[22] Pouliopoulos and Maximos were expelled from the KKE because they criticised the Comintern's intervention in Greek affairs (and because of Trotskyism). Stavridis saw the Macedonian programme of the Comintern as unrealistic and harmful to the electoral chances of the KKE. The Comintern resolution on the Macedonian question resulted in splits and resignations within the CPY as well, in Rothschild (1959): 232–238 and 242–243; and Degras (1971): 157.

[23] Indeed, between 1920 and 1923 the BCP came second to the *BANU* in parliamentary elections.

After being severely reprimanded by the Comintern for their neutrality during the coup of June 1923, albeit in circumstances totally adverse to their success, the Bulgarian communists decided to test their revolutionary potential in the desperate uprising of September 1923, which failed. The BCP was banned and its membership dramatically declined; in fact it almost collapsed, as nearly all of its high-ranking members were arrested or left the country. In its first underground conference held in Vitosha in 1924, the local Bulgarian communist leadership (Manev and Yankov) retained a factionist, revolutionary line, which signalled the so-called 'ultra-left sectarian' phase of the BCP. In parallel with the local one, a central committee was also functioning abroad (under the leadership of Kolarov and Dimitrov), which was disowned by the local communists after 1930. In 1927, the *Workers' Party* was created as a legally constituted communist front and reached its peak in 1932–1933 (with 27,078 members), when the illegal BCP had just 3,732 members. It seems, however, that this party was used only for electoral trappings without thoroughly representing the Youth League dominating the BCP. After the coup of 1934, membership of the *Workers' Party* fell dramatically (to 3,837), when the BCP had 3,395 members.[24] Apparently, the so-called 'ultra-left sectarians' of the Youth League (Vasilev, Iskrov), who had favoured an insurrectionary policy and opposed frontist policies,[25] broke with the central committee abroad in their efforts to maintain a stronghold on the BCP. The Youth League had developed a strong anti-nationalist discourse; significantly, it declared the Day of Cyril and Methodius to be chauvinistic and priest-ridden, and branded Vazov as a wild bourgeois chauvinist.[26] Clearly, at that time, the BCP ignored (if not opposed) national holidays and anniversaries.[27] Yet, as we shall see, the BCP was to pay tribute to all these national figures by organising national anniversaries.

The event that would radically shift the domestic communist line in the long run was the Leipzig trial of Georgi Dimitrov (1933). His plea before the Leipzig Court and his exoneration would exalt the hero of Leipzig to the leadership of the Comintern as well as to his recognition as the acknowledged leader of the BCP. Moreover, the origins

[24] Oren (1971): 109.
[25] Dragoicheva (1979): 29, Rothschild (1959): 287–290, and Dellin (1979): 52.
[26] Vasilev (1989): 13–14.
[27] Bell (1977): 179.

of the national(ist) discourse of the BCP during and after the Second World War can be detected in his plea before the Leipzig Court, which actually combined elements of both internationalist and nationalist discourses. At the very outset, he undertook to defend the Bulgarian narod (people-nation),[28] a defence which the 'Hristo Botev' radio station often broadcast and drew on during the Second World War.[29] Responding to charges that he was a 'suspicious character from the Balkans' and a 'savage Bulgarian', Dimitrov, declared his complete indifference to the personal abuse he suffered from the press, insisting that it was the Bulgarian narod which had been offended through him, thus implying that the honour of the Bulgarian narod was more important than he was. Overall, the way he conducted his plea turned to a large extent on presenting himself in a nationalistic light.

Dimitrov's defence of the Bulgarian narod consisted of two main arguments. First, he asserted the 'antiquity' of Bulgarian civilisation, as evidenced by the history of the Bulgarian language. He tried to use this to prove the superiority of Bulgarian civilisation over that of Germany stressing that:

> …at a period when the German Emperor Karl V vowed that he would talk German only to his horses, at a time when the German nobility and intellectual circles wrote only Latin and were ashamed of their mother-tongue, in 'barbarous' Bulgaria the apostles Cyril and Methodius invented and spread the use of the old Bulgarian script.

Thus, Dimitrov alleged that the Bulgarians attained national consciousness by developing a vernacular into a literary language much earlier than the Germans and other 'civilised' Europeans. By arguing that Bulgarian civilisation was superior to that of Germany, Dimitrov countered German nationalism and racism with a kind of Bulgarian nationalism and even racism. Secondly, Dimitrov argued that proof of the civilised character of the Bulgarian narod lay in the preservation of the Bulgarian language and the Bulgarian nationality ('natsionalnost') through the centuries under very difficult historical conditions: "five hundred years under a foreign yoke". He declared, also, that he was proud to say that he was a "son of the Bulgarian working class",

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[28] Dimitrov, *Minutes of the Speech before the Court (1933)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 364–365.

[29] See, for instance, broadcasts of Kolarov, *Anniversary of the Reichstag Fire*, Lukanov, *10 years of the Reichstag Fire,* and Chervenkov, *11 years*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 124–126, (1952, vol. 5): 151–153, and (1952, vol. 6): 138–140 respectively.

thereby combining class and national pride. Through his plea Dimitrov accomplished his international communist task, since he defended the international communist movement and his national task alike, drawing upon both Marxist and national discourses.

In this case, internationalism and communist nationalism were intertwined earlier than the 'national line' being endorsed by the Cominern and adopted by communist parties. With his plea, Dimitrov offered an aptle paradigm of how Marxism can be compatible with nationalism. When the hero of Leipzig became the General Secretary of the Comintern, his plea was elevated to the fundamental text of the international communist movement read not only by communists but also by many anti-fascists; the mobilisation for Dimitrov's cause was massive, as his trial was considered to be the first confrontation with, and defeat of, fascism. Dimitrov had gained international acknowledgement, as Thorez's statement at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern reveals: "No one else could deal with these questions [including the popular front strategy] with greater competence and authority than our comrade, Dimitrov, *the hero of Leipzig*".[30] In addition, the communist parties and their 'audience' had become familiar with the 'national line' which the developer of the popular front was soon to introduce.

However, it was only in the late 1930s that Dimitrov became the acknowledged and unchallenged leader of the BCP and the Bulgarian old guard in Moscow restored its control over the Party.[31] The Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the BCP in January 1935 opened the way for talks with other left-wing parties aimed at the establishment of a People's Front and members of the then politically degraded *Workers' Party* and trade unions were accepted. The Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the BCP in 1936 installed Dimitrov's popular front policy as the Party's new line[32] and thus gained mastery over the so-called 'ultra-left sectarians'. Interestingly, in a declaration in 1936, again aimed at the establishment of a People's Front, the Bulgarian communists declared their love for their fatherland, opposed assimilation [of nations], blamed the Bulgarian bourgeoisie for "having severed living parts of Bulgaria and placed them under foreign yoke", fell in with revisionist views, and spoke about Bulgarian minorities in neighbouring countries (Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece).[33] According

[30] Cited in Zarchev (1972): 29.
[31] Dellin (1979): 52.
[32] Bell (1986): 49.
[33] Cited in Vasilev (1989): 17.

to the communist leadership, a programme of national and democratic character i.e. the founding declaration of the Fatherland Front (1942), could awaken and rally round a powerful Fatherland Front all the patriotic forces of Bulgaria[34] and even reach hesitant fascists.[35] The domestic 'ultra-left sectarian' leadership, blamed for Trotskyism, was purged by none other than the future dissenter, 'Titoist' Traicho Kostov along with Damyanov and Stanke Dimitrov-Marek,[36] who came from Moscow in the mid-1930s. By the late 1930s, the 'Muscovites' had finally prevailed. Moscow-centred discourse predominated over the local mechanism inside Bulgaria, since the latter was underground and had an extremely low membership. The leadership of Dimitrov, the hero of Leipzig, was henceforth indisputable. Home-based militants welcomed the 'seizure of power' by their experienced comrades from Moscow, especially Dimitrov, without objections.[37] Therefore, it could be argued that during the Second World War the official ideology of the BCP had already been engraved by the leadership of Moscow, having Dimitrov in premier position.

After the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, its policy regarding the national question in the Balkans was substantially reconsidered. Instead of seeking alliance with militant minority organisations promising independence in a Balkan federation, the communist parties confined themselves to demanding minority rights within the existing states. Such a policy, it was calculated, would not disenchant minorities and, most importantly, would not deter agrarian and social-democratic parties from allying with the communists. In this context, an independent Macedonian nationality was still admitted, even though each Balkan communist party could interpret it as they chose and decide how far to promote the Macedonian question. Consequently, the orientation of Macedonians and party jurisdiction over Macedonia remained open, causing disputes among Balkan communists. With regard to the BCP, in 1934, during the conference of the Balkan Secretariat of the ECCI, Bulgarian communists recognised Macedonians as a separate nation, though Kolarov insisted on

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[34] Dimitrov (1971): 14 ff.
[35] Sharlanov (1966): 69.
[36] Dragoicheva (1979): 560; Dellin (1979): 52; Bell (1986): 49.
[37] Both Dragoicheva and Kostov, the two most significant local communists, appreciated and welcomed directives and aid from Dimitrov and the Foreign Bureau, in Dragoicheva (1979): *passim* and Isusov (2000): 161 and 165 respectively.

the Bulgarian nationality of the Macedonian Slavs.[38] At the beginning of the Second World War, the Bulgarian communists tried to bring Macedonia under their own organisational jurisdiction, keeping firm control over the Macedonian local committee before August 1941.[39] However, party jurisdiction over Macedonia was eventually given to the CPY, because Stalin took an essentially conservative view of territorial changes.[40] In this context, Bulgarian communists insisted on an essentially independent Macedonian party organisation separate from the CPY.[41] Far from Macedonian self-determination being just a Soviet directive or a result of Tito's dynamism, Bulgarian communists intended to wisely manipulate the Macedonian question lest it wreck domestic and international negotiations.[42] At home, the development of the people front strategy inclined the communists to pay deference to entrenched Bulgarian nationalist claims over Macedonia; abroad, concerns to preserve the anti-German alliance had to be respected.

Regional communist politics became overly complicated due to a set of parameters. Firstly, mainly due to the oppressive assimilative practices of Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek state authorities, an indigenous Macedonian nationalism was emerging. This nationalism had already grown into an uncontrolled partisan movement before a communist resistance movement emerged in the area. Secondly, at the beginning of the war Macedonian communists were for the most part ambivalent in their allegiance, if not rather more attached to the BCP than the CPY.[43] At the same time, Titoist partisans could take advantage of both anti-Serbian and anti-Bulgarian resentment as well as the regionalist sentiments of the Macedonian population. Indeed, while the local population initially welcomed Bulgarian troops, they would soon see them as oppressors, largely due to high centralisation and violent acculturation of the politics pursued by the Bulgarian occupiers. Finally, Tito's prestige and popularity, together with the success of

[38] Vasilev (1989): 14.
[39] BCP Records Fund 3, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 590 (1941).
[40] King (1973): 59
[41] Dragoicheva (1979): 351, 353, 359. Significantly, in the mid-1943 Tempo stated that "the BCP in vain dreams illusions of an autonomous Macedonia", cited in Dragoicheva (1979): 361.
[42] Dragoicheva (1979): 310–314.
[43] Benson (2001): 88 and Singleton (1976): 92.

the communist-led partisan movement, swung the majority towards a Yugoslav orientation.

Inside Bulgaria, the BCP encountered other difficulties during the Second World War. The national politics of the dynasty and government seemed to have effaced the 'historical injustices' of the Treaty of San Stefano that a 'truncated' Bulgaria had been created, after the inclusion of Southern Dobrudzha into Bulgaria's territory (Craiova Agreement, August 1940), and the annexation of most of Macedonia and Thrace (April 1941). The incorporation of these 'unredeemed' lands, without Bulgaria having been substantially involved in the War, enhanced the credibility of Boris and his government. Such national successes came at a considerable price, however. To pursue Bulgaria's territorial demands and secure its gains, Boris had joined the Axis converting Bulgaria into the gendarmerie of the Balkans and depriving her of substantial material resources. Moreover, with the looming defeat of the Axis, Boris's policy put Bulgaria in a precarious position contributing to the discrediting of the monarchy and the increase of communist prestige and credibility. Miller maintains that Boris was planning to take Bulgaria out of the war and approach the Allies, with a view to securing Bulgaria's territorial gains after the end of the conflict.[44] However, the removal of Boris from the political scene, after his 'unexplained' death, furthered the communist cause. The regent, Prince Cyril, was strongly pro-German, so Bulgarian subservience to fascist Germany became more marked than it had been in the past. This facilitated the BCP's efforts to attribute Bulgaria's predicament to the policies of her 'treacherous' rulers.

Having suffered heavy blows, the BCP was rather weak during the Second World War. First of all, it had been outlawed for many years and its following had dwindled dramatically. Membership had reached its peak of 39,000 long ago in 1923.[45] After its merger with the *Workers' Party* (1940), it had only 6,890 members.[46] Nevertheless, the BCP had a membership of around 2,500 in the Soviet Union consisting of Bulgarian political emigrants.[47] The police were so effective in persecuting communists that by the end of 1942, most of the BCP leadership and cadres were dead or in prison, while those outside prison were preoc-

[44] Miller (1975): 135–146.
[45] Bell (1986): 31.
[46] Oren (1971): 109.
[47] Valeva (1997): 42.

cupied with survival.[48] Under these circumstances, the BCP was unable to operate even underground; since it was clandestine, it could not develop a significant communication network with the masses. Similar to other countries which were satellites of Germany, such as Hungary,[49] which had not experienced war conditions and the barbarous policies of German occupation to a great extent, the efforts of the scarce communist militants to win over the masses had limited results.

The partisan movement was also weak, numbering approximately 10,000 people.[50] The development of a resistance movement contained intrinsic difficulties. Since Bulgaria was at peace, partisans were unable to equip themselves with weapons from a defeated army; moreover, the police proved effective in persecuting clandestine groups, while at the same time launching offensives able to disorganise the NOVA (e.g. in the autumn of 1943). In the first half of 1943, the record of the resistance movement primarily comprised acts of urban terrorism, political assassinations and minor sabotage, as partisans had to fight the Bulgarian army and gendarmerie rather than the few German troops stationed in the country.[51] Assistance from the Allies could not reach Bulgarian partisans, as the resistance movement was small, and the Allies wanted Bulgaria to remain neutral in terms of participation in war operations.[52] Despite two seemingly favourable conditions—the lack of a right-wing resistance movement seeking to restore the pre-war status quo and the popular resentment caused by the allied air-raids (November 1943–March 1944)—the BCP could not significantly influence or mobilise the masses. As a result, a strong, armed resistance movement did not begin to grow until spring 1944.[53]

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[48] For details see Dragoicheva (1979): 54–70 and 75–78.

[49] Molnar (1990): 68–83.

[50] Kalonkin (2001): 43 gives data on 8,814 fallen partisans. Bell (1986): 63 estimates figures of partisans and helpers (yatatsi) at 10,000 and 20,000 respectively. Padev (1948): 27 gives figures of killed partisans at 9,415 and of the total movement at approximately 28,000, when it reached its peak in the summer of 1944. Dragoicheva (1979): 579 speaks about 20,000 partisans and 10,000 members of military units just before the communist takeover. Anyway, whatever the real number is, it implies the weakness of the movement.

[51] Stavrianos (2000): 769.

[52] Bulgaria had joined the Axis, but did not declare war on the Soviet Union. She maintained occupying forces in Yugoslavia and Greece, but did not fight against the Allies on any front, not even on the crucial Eastern Front.

[53] Bell (1986): 59–63 and Miller (1975): 195–199. As Bell (1986): 69 points out, not earlier than 10 August 1943 a National Committee of the Fatherland Front was established and, as Dragoicheva (1979): 185–187 indicates, not earlier than February 1943 a directive of the Central Committee of the BCP calling for an armed insur-

Apart from its weakness, the BCP faced a series of difficulties. First, it was hard to contest the economic politics of Czar Boris and Filov's government, as at the outset of the war, in particular, Bulgaria witnessed an economic revival. There was a temporary boom in processed foodstuffs up to 1942 and a constant expansion in tobacco manufacture and the shipbuilding industry, while the population were relatively well off and untouched by the rigors of the conflict until later in the war,[54] due to Bulgaria's neutrality. Second, the fact that Boris tolerated a moderate opposition undermined the Party's approach. Besides, Boris's policies seemed to be successful, his regime was deprived of ideology ('bezpartien rezhim')[55] and people were apathetic towards politics. Third, not only did Boris's national successes reconcile anti-fascist right-wing parties with the Czar but they also attracted communists. Many of the BCP's sympathisers had been won over by the government's nationalist policy. As a result, as Miller points out, some Party cadres found nationalism more appealing than internationalism![56] Fourth, the Nazi–Soviet Pact of August 1939 and the Soviet invasion of Poland in September undermined the strategy of building popular fronts. Despite the fact that the Bulgarian Marxist philosopher, Todor Pavlov, justified the pact as a contribution to peace and the Soviet invasion of Poland as an intervention to protect fellow Slavs,[57] the BCP's ability to implement popular front tactics was clearly impaired. After Germany invaded the Soviet Union, the BCP was unprepared for partisan activity.

Confronting this harsh political reality, the BCP had to broaden its membership and implement People's Front tactics, that is, the pursuit of alliance and unity with opposition parties and the so-called 'patriotic and democratic or anti-fascist forces'. The BCP showed increasing flexibility in its negotiations; it sought alliance with various political forces and figures, even some from the Right (e.g. the Zveno). Furthermore, the BCP participated in the Fatherland Front's negotiations with Bagryanov's government, which only ended after an article writ-

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rection was formed. In her memoirs she, essentially, acknowledges that prevailing conditions were disadvantageous for the development of armed struggle and for a Titoist-like takeover.

[54] Radice (1977): 16 and Brown (1970): 6.

[55] Miller (1975): 90–92 and Pavlowitch (1999): 323.

[56] Miller (1975): 39, 53 and 56–57. See, also, Valeva (1997): 43.

[57] Bell (1986): 55 and Miller (1975): 16–17.

ten by Dimitrov on the pro-German character of this government.[58] Apparently, the uncertain position of the BCP and the People's Front strategy opened the field for negotiations and political alliances.

The implementation of popular front tactics was a difficult task, however. Within the BCP there were ultra-left tendencies claiming either that the communists had to struggle alone or conceiving of the Fatherland Front as a loose movement; as a result, not all communists were willing to set up Fatherland Front committees.[59] Outside the BCP, some opposition leaders oscillated between joining the Fatherland Front and embarking on activities to shift governmental policies without the communists.[60] Moreover, as Dragoicheva testifies in her memoirs, having allied with the communists, some figures (Velchev, Toshev, Stanchev, and Genovski) were not always completely loyal to the Fatherland Front. It is a point of fact that not earlier than January 1944 the National Committee of the Fatherland Front operated normally issuing its first manifestos.[61] Some other opposition leaders (Mushanov, Pastuhov and Girginov of the Democratic Party; and Gichev of the conservative wing of BANU-Vrabcha-1) totally rejected a broad coalition with the BCP. They were deterred from joining the Fatherland Front for three main reasons. First, non-communist opposition leaders feared that the communists dominated the coalition.[62] Second, they believed that Boris would change his attitude and extricate Bulgaria from the war, at the right time for Bulgaria. Then, they expected to be called to 'save Bulgaria' and restore the constitution.[63] Finally, many political figures embarked upon the course of collaboration with 'quislings and hirelings' or a putsch rather than an insurrection, because they sought to ensure a non-communist post-war

[58] Miller (1975): 176 and Dragoicheva (1979): 520–530.

[59] Dragoicheva (1979): 219–220 and 402.

[60] Such as Petkov and Dragnev of BANU-Pladne; Georgiev of the Zveno; and Cheshmedzhiev of the BWSDP. Significantly, Georgiev and Petkov signed the so-called 'declaration of ten' prominent opposition figures, which was a move that undermined the setting up of a people's front, in Dragoicheva (1979): 239.

[61] Dragoicheva (1979): 382–387.

[62] On the negotiations of the communists with the non-fascist opposition, see Dragoicheva (1979).

[63] This was the case of Georgiev and Petkov, who appeared reluctant to sign Fatherland Front documents in September 1943, when the 'declaration of ten' and the death of Boris seemed to be in favour of their participation in the next government; in Dragoicheva (1979): 103–109, 256–257 and Bell (1986): 67–68.

regime. For this reason, many of them chose collaboration as the lesser of two evils.[64]

The national successes of Boris' regime and the enthusiasm they generated affected the political discourse of the BCP. The necessity of winning over the masses under a partisan movement prompted the Party to adopt ideological elements that would be familiar to and resonate among the Bulgarian masses. In this strategic context, a discourse giving prominence to the 'nation' proved the ideal means, since nationalism constituted a convenient ideology for overcoming 'heteroglossia', that is the difference between the language of power and the social dialects of the ordinary people.[65] Marxism-Leninism in societies such as Romania and Bulgaria had little appeal, since communist ideology had not acquired deep roots. On the contrary, these societies were heirs to old politics couched in a language of national identity.[66] The 'nation' and its interests already constituted elements of the Bulgarian communists' discourse, but now they became more pronounced, dominant and durable. The writings and broadcasts of prominent Bulgarian communists, above all of Georgi Dimitrov, reveal the syncretism of nationalism and Marxism that had originated in the 1930s but developed extensively during the Second World War.

1.2 *Elements of the National(ist) Discourse of the Bulgarian Communist Leadership*

1.2.a *The Anti-Imperialist Theory*

The Leninist anti-imperialist theory was implemented and elaborated in Dimitrov's discourse on the national question. As has been noted, Lenin had introduced a stratification dividing the world into three main types of nation: the advanced capitalist, that is, the imperialist powers; the nations of Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Russia; and the

[64] Stavrianos (2000): 763.
[65] Verdery (1991): 122 drawing on Bakhtin.
[66] Significantly, even anarchist-communists, whose political orientation was unambiguously anti-national, recognised an organisational structure on national grounds; see, BCP Records Fund 272, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 1 (1945): 2–7. However, their argument that there are no patriotic and national ideals for the working men was not influential at all; see BCP Records Fund 272, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 37 (1946): 1.

semi-colonial countries and colonies.[67] Within this Leninist frame of reference, it could be suggested that an Eastern Europe nation could be proletarised in times of imperialist crisis and reduced to a semi-colony or mere colony. With regard to Bulgaria, in the late-1920s Dimitrov presented imperialist powers as foreign conquerors who were keeping her virtually occupied by the onerous war reparation payments. Dimitrov regarded Bulgaria as having been transformed into a semi-colony of imperialist powers who exploited the Balkans due to their geographical, military, strategic and economic position. Dimitrov argued that the Balkans supplied imperialist powers with an important market, sources of raw materials and soldiers for imperialist wars. Imperialists maintained the national conflicts in the Balkans "by preserving their intolerable territorial division",[68] in order to facilitate the creation of an anti-Soviet bloc for the threatened war against the Soviet Union. Thus, all the Balkans and Bulgaria especially could not pursue an independent national policy, as imperialist powers were oppressing, denationalising and colonising Balkan nations.[69] In this sense, the anti-imperialist theory vindicated an anti-colonial national liberation movement.

During the Second World War, Bulgarian communists sharply criticised German imperialism in particular, as the rest of the Great Powers were allies of the Soviet Union. At that time, it was claimed, Bulgaria, despite the official discourse of a 'united Bulgaria', had, in effect, been reduced to 'a [mere] colony of Germany' rather than a semi-colony of imperialists.[70] In his writings, Dimitrov stressed the 'total national enslavement of the Bulgarian people' to Germany, since German military authorities controlled Bulgaria's main railway lines, ports and airports and exploited Bulgarian production and raw materials rendering her economy an 'appendage of Germany'.[71] It was also suggested that Germany's interference extended to domestic political

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[67] Lenin, *The Socialist Revolution and the Rights of Nations to Self-determination (Theses) (April 1917)*, in Lenin (1969): 163–164.

[68] Dimitrov, *Imperialism in the Balkans (La Federation Balkanique, 15.08.1929)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 308–310.

[69] Dimitrov, *The Main Tasks of the Balkan Communist Parties (Sixth Congress of the Comintern 4.08.1928),* in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 293–294.

[70] Kolarov, *The Botev Den (02.06.1942)*, and Poptomov, *A Sacred and Just Struggle of our People (20.08.1942),* in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 397–399 and (1951, vol. 3): 137–139 respectively.

[71] Dimitrov, *Wither Bulgaria?, in Pravda #230, 16.09.1943*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 212–213. See, also, Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): *passim*.

affairs. Dimitrov implied that Germany had plotted the death of Czar Boris, because the monarchy had begun to stray from German absolute influence and stressed that the German delegation, which arrived in Sofia for Boris's funeral, sought to secure Bulgaria's pro-German policy by appointing the Council of Regents.[72] Within this context, the will of the Czar could not change Bulgaria's pro-German policy, because Bulgaria had become a true vassal of Germany rather than an ally.[73] The only force that could subvert Bulgaria's status as an oppressed nation was the growth of a national liberation movement, which, according to the Stalinist interpretation of the anti-imperialist theory,[74] would result from the awakening of Bulgarian national consciousness.

According to Leninist anti-imperialist theory, within the boundaries of the oppressed nation, a comprador bourgeoisie obedient to the dominant or imperialist nation reigns, expressing its own nationalism servile to the interests of the dominant or imperialist power but distinct and definitely alien to the people's national idea.[75] In Dimitrov's application of anti-imperialist theory, bourgeois classes and dynasties constituted lackeys of imperialists in the Balkans. In Bulgaria, it was argued, anti-patriotic ruling classes and a treacherous government comprised of 'servants obedient' to imperialist powers or 'German agents'[76] oppressed and exploited the narod (people-nation). Imperialist aid empowered the ruling class while in return, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and monarchy handed Bulgaria over to imperialist states.[77]

The identification of Bulgaria with colonies and oppressed nations, along with the presence of a comprador bourgeoisie, rendered her a putative anti-imperialist international force. Bulgaria, then, was

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[72] Dimitrov, *Wither Bulgaria? (Pravda #230, 16.09.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 214–215.

[73] According to the founding declaration of the Fatherland Front, Bulgaria was being "transformed into a vassal of Hitler" during the war and the Bulgarian people "into slaves of the German imperialism", in Dimitrov (1971): 14.

[74] Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism (1924)*, in Bruce (1973): 93.

[75] A distinction between the national idea of the ruling class and that of the working class had been formulated at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928).

[76] Chervenkov, *Wither? (08.09.1941)* and Kolarov, *Czar Boris-Hitler's Agent (31.01.19420)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 92–93 and (1951, vol. 2): 71–73 respectively.

[77] Dimitrov, *After the Uprising (Rabotnicheski Vestnik #2, 07.11.1923),* in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 173–174; Dimitrov, *The Bloody Drive against the Labour Movement (Krasnii International Profsoyozov, 1925)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 209, and Dimitrov, *The October Revolution and the Balkans (International Press Correspondence, 18.11.1927)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 276.

embarking on an anti-imperialist and national liberation struggle in order to gain her national independence and freedom. Being experienced in orchestrating anti-imperialist struggles, the communists were the most suitable to assume the hegemony of this national liberation movement. The anti-imperialist theory allowed the BCP to deploy national discourse, whilst retaining a Marxist idiom. Thus, to compete with the nationalist politics of the Czar and his government, the BCP and the Fatherland Front developed the theory that Bulgaria could be transformed from an oppressed, humiliated nation, vastly exploited by an aggressive imperialism, into an independent and liberated land.

In their anti-imperialist struggle, the Bulgarian people could expect assistance from the great opponent of imperialism, the socialist Soviet Union. It was underlined that "Bulgaria [had] won its national liberation by dint of the Russian people [in 1877–1878]";[78] moreover, it was argued that the Russian people—not the former Russian Empire—had disposed of the 'Teutonic' threat, while the Germans were presented as the eternal foe of Slavs and Nazi imperialism, in particular, was the sworn enemy. Consequently, 'the affinity of the Bulgarian to the Russian narod (people–nation)'[79] was natural. As a result, a pan-Slav discourse re-emerged declaring that 'a common Slav destiny' united all the Slavs 'against the Teutonic drive to assimilate the Slavs'.[80] Dimitrov-Marek and Chervenkov envisaged this pan-Slav movement as different from those of the past, since, it was claimed, the Russians were no longer guided by occupying interests and they respected the freedom and independence of other peoples; therefore, all Slav peoples united as equals.[81] This pan-Slav discourse was to play a major role in post-war Bulgarian politics. Thus, it was claimed, the national independence of Bulgaria relied, first and foremost, upon its affinity with the (Russian) Soviet Union and the neighbouring Slav nations—the

[78] Dimitrov, *Wither Bulgaria? (Pravda #230, 16.09.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 209–210, Dimitrov, *Bulgaria's Road to Salvation (1944)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 231.

[79] Dimitrov, *Wither Bulgaria? (Pravda #230, 16.09.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 210.

[80] Dimitrov, *The Crisis in Bulgaria (Pravda #318, 27.12.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 224.

[81] Dimitrov-Marek, *Long Life to the Slav Unity (06.08.1941)*, and Chervenkov, *Servants of Pan-Germanism in Bulgaria (27.08.1941)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 27–28 and (1950, vol. 1): 70–73 respectively.

Macedonians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats and Slovenes,[82] who were also groaning under imperialist yokes. In this sense, the anti-imperialist theory underpinned a kin-based discourse, that is, the re-emergent pan-Slavism, and could explain the shift of Bulgaria's foreign policy towards the Soviet Union, as proposed by the communists. Hence, the internationalist duty of the Bulgarian communists to defend their socialist fatherland, that is the USSR, partly relied on tribal kinship and nationalism.

1.2.b *Patriotism and Internationalism*

Comintern's Seventh Congress resolution, written by Dimitrov, expounded a Manichean scheme of a 'good' versus 'bad' version of nationalism. The good version of nationalism, that is patriotism, it was claimed, was not opposed to internationalism. As Dimitrov wrote in his diary, a properly understood 'people's patriotism' was compatible with proletarian internationalism; and "rootless cosmopolitanism that denies national feelings and the notion of a homeland has nothing in common with proletarian internationalism".[83] Attempting to bridge the gap between Marxism and nationalism left open by the Leninist tradition, Dimitrov introduced a version of nationalism reconcilable with socialism on three levels. First, the internationalist communist movement had to acquaint itself with *national peculiarities*, and, thus, make socialism a national case. Dimitrov stressed that the path towards socialism was different for every nation and was dependent on its particular historical, national and other conditions. Therefore, the path of socialism could not follow the same cut-and-dried Soviet pattern.[84] Second, proletarian internationalism acquired a national dimension as addressed to the 'socialist fatherland'. In this sense, the proletariat, a universal class by definition, seemed to have acquired a certain fatherland, which it was prepared to die for. Defence of the integrity of the Soviet Union, that is, a plainly national duty, became identical with the struggle for socialism. Apparently, this reasoning would justify communist fighting for the fatherland provided that it had or would become socialist. Third, proletarian internationalism had to "*acclimatise itself* in each country in order to strike deep roots in its

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[82] Dimitrov, *Wither Bulgaria? (Pravda #230, 16.09.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 212 and 217.

[83] Banac (2003):163.

[84] Dimitrov, *Speech before the Sofia District Party Conference (1946)*, in Dimitrov (1972): xxii.

native land",[85] in relation to the national forms of the proletarian class struggle. Thus, proletarian internationalism gained a national feature, peculiar to each place where it took root.

In their attempt to link Marxism with nationalism and national with social struggles, the Bulgarian communists found the word 'narod' which means both nation and people,[86] very useful. Surprisingly, there is an odd precedent of complete coincidence of 'narod' and 'nation' in Lomonosov's nationalistic ideology (18th century).[87] It is true that the word 'natsiia' (nation) is used far less than the word 'narod' by the Bulgarian communists. Nevertheless, derivatives such as 'natsionalno' (national) are quite common and interchangeable with 'naroden'. Words like 'otechestvo' (fatherland) and 'patriot' are also frequent.[88] The equation of people and nation meant that the BCP was able to present its own interests as those of the whole people and the united nation. In this vein, Chervenkov broadcast from the Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' that "the national unity of the Bulgarians … is dictated from root state, political, social and economic interests of the Bulgarian people".[89] Claiming to be the vanguard of the people, who gradually superseded the proletariat in their discourse, the Bulgarian communists assumed to speak in the name of the nation. As we shall see, this tendency informed the BCP's post-war position: all the people had to consent with the patriotic line couched by the communists; otherwise, they put themselves outside the Bulgarian nation, became national apostates and deserved severe punishment.

1.2.c *Binary Divisions*

Bulgarian communists resorted to bi-polar schemata in order to build a patriotic image in contrast to the so-claimed anti-national character of their political opponents. The construction of the patriotic image of the BCP and the Fatherland Front needs to be explored on three levels.

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[85] Dimitrov, *The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism (Report before the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, August 1935)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 73.

[86] See, for instance, the following very revealing title of Cvervenkov's broadcast: "Liberation of the narod from the German yoke is the job of the narod itself", in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 7): 25–26. Here 'narod' implies both world division into nations and social stratification.

[87] Greenfeld (1992): 242.

[88] Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950–1952, vol. 1–vol. 7): *passim*.

[89] Chervenkov, *For the National Unity of the Bulgarians (12.05.1944)*, Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 6): 191–194.

On the level of domestic politics, the selfish short-term interests of ruling classes historically alien to the Bulgarian nation were presented as antagonistic to the national interests of the BCP and the Fatherland Front. On the level of international relations, the following dilemma was put before Bulgarian citizens: they had to choose between the pro-German/pro-fascist policy of the dynasty and war governments, having disastrous effects for Bulgaria, or the pro-Allied (more especially, pro-Soviet) policy of the Fatherland Front, supporting democratic nations and opting for national salvation and "democracy, true national unity, peace and collaboration with the Balkan nations".[90] On the level of ideology, the Bulgarian communist leaders' discourse contrasted two mutually exclusive terms; bourgeois nationalism and 'true patriotism'.[91]

To construct the anti-national image of the Bulgarian ruling elites, Bulgarian communists presented them as historically alien to the nation. It was argued that the Bulgarian bourgeoisie emanated from the Ottoman era and Ottoman traditions had opposed the national liberation movement of the 1870s and had not fought for Bulgarian national liberation. Moreover, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie as well as the dynasty were presented as they had been governing, since the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman yoke, because of the aid provided by and on behalf of imperialist powers.[92] References to the First World War in communist texts portrayed a German agent king and corrupt political forces that caused Bulgaria's disintegration and resulted in national calamity.[93] For all these reasons, it was claimed, the bourgeoisie and the dynasty were not genuinely Bulgarian.

In respect of the Second World War, Bulgarian ruling elites were characterised as unquestionably treacherous and anti-patriotic. The dynasty was directly identified as German: 'the German Coburg

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[90] BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 7 (March 1944): 2. In the founding declaration of the Fatherland Front, in Dimitrov (1971): 14–15, the pointing out of a 'real national [natsionalna] danger', coming from 'the anti-national policy of the government of Czar Boris', and the imminent necessity of establishing the Fatherland Front for 'Bulgaria's salvation' are two notions with national allusion.

[91] See, also, similar polarities in the founding declaration of the Fatherland Front in Dimitrov (1971): 14–15.

[92] Dimitrov, *The Bloody Drive against the Labour Movement (Krasnii International Profsoyozov, 1925)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 209 and Dimitrov, *The Bulgarian Lesson (Krestyanski International),* in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 236–237. For instance, in the second reference, Czar Ferdinand is called the "crowned agent of Austro–German imperialism".

[93] BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 1[a] (March 1943): *passim.*

dynasty'.[94] Chervenkov presented Czar Boris as of German blood, of non-Bulgarian traits, and a life-long servant of the Germans.[95] Therefore, it was implied, this 'German dynasty' would, in all cases, always subject Bulgaria to the interests of German imperialist policy. Dimitrov called the Bulgarian government the 'lackey of bloodthirsty Hitler', 'rabid pro-German agents', 'dunces or people who had sold out their conscience to the foreign conquerors', 'betrayers of narod (people–nation)'.[96] Chervenkov called intellectuals, who had aligned themselves to the government and disallowed the Slav origin of Bulgarians, 'Germanised', 'shameful cosmopolitans', 'who had been sold to foreigners cheaper than Judas'.[97] Chervenkov argued that Germany controlled the productive forces, the security apparatuses, and everything in Bulgaria by dint of Germanised governmental representatives.[98]

Dimitrov predicted that the 'so-called statesmen of Bulgaria' would transfer the capital they had accumulated during the war abroad and leave Bulgaria when it collapsed, just as Czar Ferdinand and Prime Minister Radoslavov had done in 1918.[99] In contrast to the provisional Bulgarian rulers, the ordinary Bulgarian people had no way of escaping the destruction caused by the war. In conclusion, the Bulgarian ruling elites were accused of betraying the interests and the future of Bulgaria, because "they were personally and materially tied to Germany and put their private interest above the national interest of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian people".[100] Not only the ruling elites but also all political forces

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[94] Dimitrov, *Wither Bulgaria? (Pravda #230, 16.09.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 216, and Kolarov, *Ferdinand Saks-koburg-gotski (12.10.1941)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 167–168.

[95] Chervenkov, *Who was Czar Boris? (04.09.1943)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 5): 116–118.

[96] Dimitrov, *There is one Way of Saving our People (Hristo Botev Broadcasting Station Speaking, 15.12.1941)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 206; Dimitrov, *Wither Bulgaria? (Pravda #230, 16.09.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 210; Dimitrov, *On the Government of Bagryanov (Hristo Botev Broadcasting Station Speaking, 05.06.1944)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 225; Dimitrov, *Bulgaria's Road to Salvation (1944)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 229.

[97] Chervenkov, *Servants of Pan-Germanism in Bulgaria (27.08.1941)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 70–73.

[98] Chervenkov, *Who does Bulgaria Command? (18.12.1941),* and *For National Struggle against the Betrayal (23.12.1941),* in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 357–358 and 378–379 respectively. Governmental representatives were called Germanised in general in broadcasts.

[99] Dimitrov, *The Crisis in Bulgaria (Pravda #318, 27.12.1943)*, (1972, vol. 2): 224.

[100] Dimitrov, *The Crisis in Bulgaria (Pravda #318, 27.12.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 223, and Kolarov, *Who does Govern Bulgaria nowadays? (02.03.1942)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 128–129. The characterisation of the government

outside the Fatherland Front were castigated for exclusively pursuing their own ends, by conspiring against each other to keep in favour with a German agent, Czar Boris.[101] Because of their selfish motives, it was argued, the opposition leaders were reluctant to join the Fatherland Front and participate in the resistance movement. They expected the monarch to shift Bulgaria's foreign policy and to call on them take over the running of the country and save the nation.

Anti-Monarchist Poster, Angelushev (1946), in Ostoich (1959): fig. 124. "Enough of national disasters. Down with the monarchy".

The communists argued that the harmful pro-German policy pursued and implemented by the treacherous Bulgarian government and the dynasty during the Second World War had brought the Bulgarian people to the brink of total disaster and caused a serious crisis in the country.[102] Chervenkov stressed that the 'national unification' of Bulgaria which the clique of Boris claimed to have realised was not a genuine solution of the Bulgarian national interests.[103] On the contrary, it had involved Bulgaria in a criminal Nazi war, which would result in a national disaster,[104] forfeiture of national independence, and outcomes detrimental to the country.[105]

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of Czar Boris as a treacherous, anti-narod and Nazi-government is repeated at the very beginning as well as the end of the founding declaration of the Fatherland Front.

[101] BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 1[a] (March 1943): 1. See the article "Any other path brings a catastrophe".

[102] In a proclamation the BCP calls them 'Germanised Bulgarian fascists', BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 219 (October 1943): 1.

[103] Chervenkov, *The clique of Czar Boris has Realised National Disaster and not National Unification (29.12.1941),* in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 398–400.

[104] See the increasing broadcasting on the impeding national disaster in 1944, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 7): *passim*.

[105] "Are we going to accept a new Dobro-Pole and a new Neuilly?" in BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 219 (October 1943): 1. Dobro-Pole is the name of the battlefield, where the Bulgarian front was broken in the First World War. As a result, Bulgaria was forced to conclude a peace treaty with the Entente. By the treaty

A treacherous government and a national crisis indicated the urgent need for national salvation,[106] which, according to Chervenkov, was beyond political ideologies.[107] In the face of Bulgaria's impending collapse, a national movement, the polar opposite of pro-German ministries and deputes, national apostates, and national traitors was rising up: communists, partisans, and patriots rallied round the national, patriotic Fatherland Front.[108] The movement constituted a coalition of parties and 'patriotic forces', gathered round the BCP to ensure salvation of the country and people from 'ruin and threatening disaster'.[109] The Fatherland Front intended to establish 'a truly Bulgarian national (natsionalno) government',[110] whose main goal would be to achieve national salvation by proposing and implementing a genuine and independent national policy. Such a government would shift Bulgaria's wartime alliance from the Nazis to the Allies, the only road to national salvation for Bulgaria.

The Fatherland Front was never emphasised as being dominated by communists, but rather as being set up by the people themselves, inspired by their national feeling.[111] As Dimitrov envisaged it, a National Front "must encompass the whole nation with the exception of the traitors and the agents of the foreign invaders".[112] Likewise, Kolarov stated that:

> …the national front for Bulgaria's salvation should gather 99% of the whole Bulgarian nation, that is, workers, peasants, artisans, and intellectuals apart from those around the clique of Boris.[113]

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of Neuilly, Bulgaria relinquished the Thracian coastline acquired in the Balkan Wars, her army was reduced and a great burden of reparation imposed.

[106] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 226 (1943); B.C.P. Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 4 [see the article "Fatherland is in danger"]; BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 8 (April 1944); B.C.P. Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 9 (June–July 1944); and B.C.P. Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 82 (March 1944). For instance, the clandestine newspaper 'Naroden Voice' appealed to the Bulgarian people to participate in the ranks of the Fatherland Front and to save Bulgaria from a new national calamity, the worst in its history, in Naroden Voice #1, June 1944, in Lambrev (1944): 10–11.

[107] Chervenkov, *For Total Unity (28.02.1944)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 6): 143–145.

[108] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 2 (December 1944).

[109] Dimitrov, *Bulgaria's Road to Salvation (1944)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 232.

[110] As it was underscored at the conclusion of its founding declaration, in Dimitrov (1971): 15.

[111] See, for instance, BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 7 (March 1944).

[112] A lot of leaflets appealed to all social strata; see BCP Records of that time.

[113] Kolarov, *Who are the Forces of Bulgaria's Salvation? (20.07.1942)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 476–479.

Consequently, every Bulgarian who was honest, patriotic, devoted to the people and the country, and ready to make sacrifices for the fatherland was called on to assist or even join partisan detachments.[114] Thereby, the Fatherland Front was designed to attract even some bourgeois-democrats as well as Agrarians and Social-Democrats.[115] By these means, the Fatherland Front was calculated to win over the vast majority of the Bulgarian nation and accomplish national unity.[116] To realise this project, the BCP repeatedly claimed that only the Fatherland Front showed genuine concern for the 'rights and interests' of the Bulgarian narod and insisted that partisans defended the interests of the whole Bulgarian narod, whilst the government was only interested in keeping public life under its control in order to implement its anti-national and anti-popular politics.[117] In conclusion, the Bulgarian nation was called to fight for its own interests and national independence under the flag of the Fatherland Front and thus overthrow pro-Hitlerist agents and establish in the future a national, genuinely Bulgarian Fatherland Front government, a people's republic, 'an independent Bulgaria'.[118]

As well as criticising the character and policies of Bulgarian ruling elites, the Bulgarian communists launched a fierce, extensive and systematic discursive polemic against their approach to the national question. Bourgeois nationalism—as expressed by the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, the Czar and the Bulgarian governments—was considered calamitous for the Bulgarian nation. Dimitrov argued that militarist

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[114] Dimitrov, *Bulgaria's Road to Salvation (1944)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 232, Kolarov, *The Road to Salvation (06.10.1941)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 147–151, and Kolarov, *Every patriot in the Front of the Fatherland (14.08.1944)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 7): 171–173.

[115] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 219 (October 1943); BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 175 (August 1943); and the Programme of the Fatherland Front, cited in Dragoicheva (1979): 15–16.

[116] BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 53 (August 1944), BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 82 (March 1944), and B.C.P. Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 103 (May 1944). As Chervenkov, *For what is the Fatherland Front Fighting? (04.10.1942)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 3): 297–299 puts it, "outside the patriotic national unity will be only German agents and negotiators".

[117] It was argued that for this reason, the government had founded the 'Public Force'. BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 7 (March 1944).

[118] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 175 (August 1943); BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 65, Archival Unit 49 (July 1944); and BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 65, Archival Unit 81 (February–March 1944).

and expansionist bourgeois nationalism resulted in two national disasters in the Balkan Wars and the First World War. Instead of annexing new territories to Bulgaria and establishing a Bulgarian hegemony in the Balkans, Bulgaria had been forced to sign the onerous Neuilly Peace Treaty.[119]

During the Second World War, it was argued, Bulgarian bourgeois nationalism followed a pro-German policy in order to achieve the so-called national 'unification of all the Bulgarians', by annexing Macedonia and Thrace to Bulgaria. Set against the great success of Boris's foreign policy to realise the long-term aspirations of Bulgarian irredentism, the Bulgarian communists remonstrated with their own national designs. On the one hand, they highlighted the considerable price that Bulgaria paid for annexations: Levi contended that the unification of Macedonia and Thrace with Bulgaria was realised only after the rulers betrayed the present and the future of Bulgaria,[120] while Dimitrov claimed that the cost to Bulgaria of regaining these territories was to "lose its own national independence under the boot of the German conquerors".[121] As a result, Bulgaria was going to suffer a third, 'total national disaster'. On the other hand, Dimitrov and Levi did not object to the incorporation of Macedonia and Thrace into Bulgaria. They suggested that 'a genuine national unification of the Bulgarians' could only be realised through a friendly agreement with self-determined Balkan peoples, with the assistance of the freedom-loving United Nations, and after the establishment of a free, independent, democratic, united and powerful Bulgaria.[122]

The polar opposite of the bourgeois nationalism which was disastrous to Bulgaria was presented to be the 'genuine patriotism' expressed by the proletariat, its vanguard, that is, the BCP, and the Fatherland Front, which had been set up to defend Bulgaria's 'genuine national

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[119] Dimitrov, *Against Military Credits (1914)* and *After the Uprising (Rabotnicheski Vestnik #2, 07.11.1923)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 40–48 and 173–174 respectively.

[120] Levi, *Agents of Hitler in Bulgaria are the Worst Enemies of the Bulgarian National Cause (05.02.1944),* in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 6): 80–82.

[121] Dimitrov, *The Crisis in Bulgaria (Pravda #318, 27.12.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 219.

[122] Dimitrov, *The Crisis in Bulgaria (Pravda #318, 27.12.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 221 and Levi, *Agents of Hitler in Bulgaria are the Worst Enemies of the Bulgarian National Cause (05.02.1944)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 6): 80–82. See, also, the first manifesto of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front (February 1944), cited in Dragoicheva (1979): 387.

interests'. In Dimitrov's discourse, the proletariat constitutes "the *only* true fighter for national freedom and independence", since it fights to save the culture of the people and to liberate the nation from the shackles of capitalism and fascism:

> *Only* the proletarian revolution can avert the destruction of culture and raise it to its highest flowering as a truly national culture—*national in form and socialist in content*…

On the whole, the socialist revolution would secure a brighter future for the nation.[123] Since the proletariat was the only genuine patriotic force and the socialist revolution the guarantor of the flowering of the national culture, the BCP claimed the unadulterated character of patriotism and gave the name patriot to anyone who adopted its aspirations. Hence, no patriotic approach to the national question could differ from that of the BCP,[124] since "the Communist Parties…remain[ed] the *only* loyal defenders and leaders of the social and national liberation struggles of the working people".[125] Articulating a progressive nationalism or patriotism was thus the privilege of the vanguard of the oppressed people, that is, the Communist Party of each nation. Within this framework, the BCP gave its own definition of the terms 'patriot' and 'patriotism' in a recommendation of its Central Committee:

> …a patriot…fights for freedom of the Bulgarian narod, for withdrawal of Hitlerite conquerors from fatherland, for bread for the people…for peace and self-determination. He is one of the people who fight against Hitler and Bulgarian traitors, who mostly, gloat about patriotism.[126]

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[123] Dimitrov, *The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism (Report before the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, August 1935)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 71–73.

[124] "When the patriotism of all social groups and political organisations was put to a severe test, [the communist parties] manifested the greatest consistency and stamina, the highest heroism, showing that they were naroden (national-people's) leaders devoted to the last to their country", in Dimitrov, *The Fatherland Front, its Development and Impending Tasks (Report to the Second Fatherland Front Congress, 02.02.1948)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 3): 153. "The Fatherland Front held aloft the national banner", ibid., 159.

[125] Dimitrov, *A Socialist Balkan Conference (Inprekor #43, 08.04.1924)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 1): 199.

[126] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 143.

In the same manner, Chervenkov claimed that a Bulgarian patriot was one who defended the national independence and dignity of Bulgaria and gave his fraternal hand to the Yugoslavs and Greeks.[127]

The appropriation of genuine patriotism and the monopoly claimed by the communists in distinguishing between patriots and traitors had a further impact on the politics of the BCP. Depending on their position in relation to communist ones, political parties and figures could often find themselves reclassified from patriots to traitors and vice versa. This opportunism was to be exercised during the Second World War, when the BCP sought alliances in a broad political scene. Whoever refused to join the Fatherland Front could easily be depicted as a traitor; this discourse would be very useful during the post-war years.

Binary divisions between bourgeois nationalism and patriotism, between treacherous ruling classes and the patriotic Fatherland Front, and between pro-German policy and alliance with democratic nations, the merging of national and social interests, processes of linking patriotism with internationalism, and anti-imperialist theory provided the BCP with theoretical tools supporting its 'left-wing nationalism', which proved to be a very effective strategic weapon for winning over the masses and for contrasting the so-called bourgeois nationalism.

1.3 *The Partisan Movement*

After the German attack on the USSR, the BCP attempted to build a People's Front and organise a resistance partisan movement. On 15 June 1942, Dimitrov delivered a report to the Foreign Bureau members of the BCP in which he urged the Bulgarian communists to seek an alliance with the democratic and patriotic forces of Bulgaria against the pro–Nazi, treacherous policy of the Bulgarian ruling elites. On 17 July 1942, the founding declaration of the Fatherland Front, namely, its programme, was announced on the underground Hristo Botev radio station. The Fatherland Front would call for arming the nation by setting up a partisan revolutionary army, the backbone of which would be the communists.

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[127] Chervenkov, *For Unity and Traitors of the Bulgarian Nation (13.09.1941)*, and *The Clique of Czar Boris has Realised National Disaster and not National Unification (29.12.1941)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 106–108 and 398–400 respectively.

1.3.a *Objectives and Apparatuses of the Partisan Movement*

The Bulgarian partisan movement had both a national and international character.[128] The international objective of the partisan movement and, later, of the 'Fatherland War' (1944–1945) was to contribute to the victory of the international anti-fascist coalition in general and to aid the Soviet Union in her combat against Nazi Germany in particular. These tasks were in terms with Stalinist directives of the aftermath of the German invasion of the USSR: to defend the USSR and defeat fascism.[129] At home the partisan movement had to accomplish a dual national task: to free Bulgaria from German invaders and to overthrow the 'Bulgarian Quislings'.[130] In other words, the Bulgarian resistance movement was, in essence, national anti-fascist; part of an international anti-fascist struggle with certain nationalist inclinations.

To hold the resistance movement the Bulgarian communists set up a people's front named after the 'Fatherland Front' taking the line that the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and the architect of people's front strategy, Dimitrov himself, suggested. As an outcome of this strategy, the political horizon of the Fatherland Front did not go beyond the framework of bourgeois democracy and its objectives were presented as moderate, so as not to 'frighten off' the majority of the population. The founding declaration of the Fatherland Front had two goals: the national liberation of Bulgaria from the German yoke and the restoration of democratic liberties and rights. The subject of this declaration was Bulgaria and not the proletariat. Words such as communism or socialism and their derivatives did not appear once in the founding declaration of the Fatherland Front.[131]

The logic of not frightening off the masses and the subsequent discursive supplanting of communist ideology and internationalism was not uncommon among communist parties in general. This was in compliance with Soviet directives suggesting that communist parties 'desist

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[128] Lyrics from the *March of the Bulgarian Insurgents* delineate these principles: "and into the fight for our fatherland/and into the fight for annihilation of fascism", in BCP Records: Fund 77, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 31 (August 1944).

[129] McDermott and Agnew (1996): 206 and Mevius (2005): 26–27.

[130] Dimitrov, *Wither Bulgaria? (Pravda #230, 16.09.1943)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 216; Dimitrov, *There is one Way of Saving our People (15.12.1941)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1972, vol. 2): 206.

[131] Dimitrov (1971): 14 ff. In the same vein, the 'Action Programme' of the MKP associated national and democratic claims, while the nation was at the epicentre of the suggested struggle, Mevius (2005): 51–54.

from pursuing socialist revolution'[132] save the Yugoslav communists less loyal to Comintern dictates, who had waged class war for some time and insisted on Sovietisation. In this context, the Comintern directed Tito to "take into consideration that at this stage the communist task is liberation from fascist oppression and not socialist revolution".[133] Nevertheless, as Pavlowitch has noted, Tito soon realised that the partisan movement "had to appear as a broader patriotic movement in order to acquire and retain the support of non-communist followers".[134] Communist demands would, it was calculated, endanger Soviet relations with Western powers. National and democratic demands[135] were put forward rather than overtly communist or more radical ones and the communists appealed to patriotism rather than the class consciousness of the proletariat, since the communist parties themselves deemed that a plain socialist programme could not win over the masses or persuade potential political allies to join people's fronts. In this context, in many meetings between communists and opposition leaders, issues such as love of the fatherland, the threat of the third national catastrophe, the necessity to shift the foreign policy, national liberation and independence, and national treason were laid down.[136]

More especially, Thorez, who led one of the most influential communist parties, estimated that the vast majority of French people were not ready for socialist revolution and by no means all the sympathisers that the PCF had won during the resistance could have been mobilised for revolution.[137] As Weydenthal points out, the Party of the Polish communists was called the Workers' [not communist] Party on Dimitrov's orders; its enemies would thus not be able to use the scarecrow of communism and the masses would perceive it as an organisation closely linked with the Polish nation and its vital interests, and a

[132] Cited in Mevius (2005): 26.
[133] Cited in Bokovoy (1998): 9.
[134] Pavlowitch (2008): 147.
[135] Significantly, Dimitrov characterised the programme of the Fatherland Front as a 'practical national democratic platform', cited in Nikolova (1983): 151. Dragoicheva (1979): 34 points out that the absence of socialist revolutionary slogans from the programme of the Fatherland Front was due to the political unreadiness of the masses and the Soviet alliance with Western powers. She, also, quotes Dimitrov's directives suggesting that the BCP not seize power on its own and forbear avowing Sovietisation, ibid., 464.
[136] In Dragoicheva (1979): 93, 131, 187; see the letters of the Central Committee of the BCP to Mushanov and Gichev in particular, ibid., 289–293.
[137] Cited in Mortimer (1979): 151.

People's Front would be better able to attract them.[138] In a country with strong traditional anti-Soviet views and emotions, slogans such as 'polish patriotism', 'national liberation', 'independence', and 'sovereignty' were articulated in the first manifesto of the PPR along with the necessity of close ties with the USSR. Similarly, in Hungary, the political programme of the MKP called for an 'independent, free and democratic Hungary',[139] while, in Romania, the principal objectives of the communist-led people's front were national liberation, independence and sovereignty as well as the establishment of a constitutional and democratic government. Lastly, as Allum and Sassoon have argued, the PCI strategy of progressive democracy and national unity was linked to the belief that "the final partisan rising should be a national insurrection for the liberation of national territory and not a revolutionary insurrection for the immediate construction of socialism".[140]

Following such opportunistic politics, the communist parties did not hesitate to collaborate with right-wing parties, even extreme ones, that is, their putative sworn enemies. In Bulgaria, the Fatherland Front forged an alliance with Zveno, a tiny group of fascist plotters and coup organisers, whose liaisons with military officers, headquarters, and the Army Minister would avail the communists of the takeover.[141] Likewise, the communist-dominated Hungarian Front included the League of the Patriarchal Cross, a monarchist anti-fascist organisation, while in Romania, the communists backed and assisted the coup d'état carried out by King Michael and a group of officers in August 1944. Lastly, the Italian communists allied with bourgeois right-wing political parties.

Instead of a communist revolution, derogation from traditional communist demands and opportunistic politics gave rise to a 'national-democratic' revolution proclaimed by the People's Fronts. It could be argued that by promoting national ideals the communist parties risked their ideology being infiltrated by these ideals and reconfigured. Indeed, by articulating and advocating a national discourse as well as adopting national slogans and buttressing national demands the communists assumed their national role. Gradually before the Second World War and dramatically during it, leadership of the communist

[138] Weydenthal (1986): 35.
[139] Molnar (1991): 73.
[140] Allum and Sassoon (1977): 174.
[141] Dragoicheva (1979): 582 and 613–620.

parties openly and deliberately utilised nationalist discourse and integrated it into Party activities.

The BCP named the various organisations that it established either by itself or in concert with other forces in ways that clearly and deliberately carried national connotations. The Bulgarian people's front was, characteristically, called the 'Fatherland Front'. Having opted for this name, the Party tried to prove that the Fatherland Front was a political formation for a certain national purpose. As has been shown, the belief was that a front for the fatherland would be more attractive to political leaders, with whom the alliance the communist parties negotiated, and to the masses, than, for instance, a front for socialism or social justice. The Fatherland Front organisation aimed to rally the broadest possible sector of the Bulgarian people. It was calculated to involve workers, peasants, employees, civil servants and the progressive intelligentsia. It also claimed the right to represent the Bulgarian nation, as everyone with "Bulgarian heart… regardless of political convictions… honest Bulgarians and patriots"[142] would join the Fatherland Front. Thus, it was represented as a nation-wide political organisation, centralised in terms of political leadership and consisting of a solid nation-wide network of committees.[143]

Being in compliance with Dimitrov's proposals at the Comiterns' Seventh Congress and Soviet directives of the time, the choice of names with national connotations for people's fronts or other political formations was not uncommon among the communist parties in Europe. It was the Soviet Union that first opted for a name related to the nation when it called the war against the Axis the 'Patriotic War'. Outside the Soviet Union, in December 1943, even without Stalin's prior approval, Gomulka founded the '*National* Council of the *Homeland*', a quasi-legislative organ comprising communists, left-wing socialists, and radical-peasants, in Poland; in parallel, the 'Union of Polish *Patriots*' was founded in the USSR. Later on, the communist-led provisional government was called the 'Polish Committee of *National Liberation*'. In Hungary, the '*Hungarian* Front', founded in May 1944, was a forerunner to the '*Hungarian National Independence* Front' conceived in the following December. In Czechoslovakia, the first coalition government, consisting of six parties, was called the '*National Front* of

[142] From a broadcast of the radio station 'Hristo Botev' on 9 November 1941, cited by Nikolova (1983): 144.

[143] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 175 (August 1943): 46.

the Working People of the cities and the countryside'. The PCI participated in the 'Committee of *National Liberation*', comprised of six anti-fascist parties, and planned the 'anti-fascist *national* uprising' in northern Italy in April 1945. Lastly, their Romanian counterpart was named the '*National* Democratic Bloc', forerunner of the '*National* Democratic Front'. In Greece, the communist-dominated mountain government antagonistic to the collaborationist one in Athens and the government-in-exile in Cairo was called the 'Political Committee of *National Liberation*'. The choice of terms related to the nation rather than to socialism, let alone communism, gives more evidence that a national-democratic revolution and not a communist one was being proclaimed by the communists.

People's Fronts were not the only organisations to carry names with national connotations: resistance armies, underground communist radio stations, and partisan organisations top a long list. The Bulgarian resistance army founded in March 1943 was called the National-People's Liberation Insurrectionary Army ('NarodnoOsvoboditelna Vistanitseska Armiya', NOVA). The BCP claimed that the NOVA and the 'Fatherland War' (1944–1945) representing the pure freedom-loving Bulgarian national character, expressed the narod's will and dignity and were a source of national pride.[144] The Bulgarian experiment was not a unique one. Identical names were chosen for resistance armies in Yugoslavia and Greece; the National-People's [Narodno] Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (NOVJ) and National People's Liberation Army (Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos, ELAS), the acronym of which makes an amazing assonance with Hellas[145] (the Greek equivalent for Greece). The Italian partisan movement formed the 'Garibaldi brigades' and the Romanian communists formed the 'Tudor Vladimirescu brigade'. As clearly implied by their names, all resistance armies were assumed to fight for the liberation of the nation and not strictly for that of the proletariat.

This was also the case for radio—a medium whose role in the mid 20th century has been underestimated and insufficiently studied. Although it is difficult to be precise about how many Bulgarians possessed a radio, it could be an effective tool given the Party's difficulties

[144] Cited in Kalonkin (2001): 13 and 16.

[145] It is noteworthy that the KKE used both the adjectives 'national' and 'people's', as 'nation' and 'people' are different words in Greek in contrast to the Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian 'naroden' which stands for both.

with regard to the distribution of printed material. At least, radio could summon into being an aural representation of the national liberation movement against the Germans and their 'Bulgarian agents'. The underground radio station run by the Bulgarian communists in the USSR was called 'Hristo Botev',[146] instead of being given the name of a prominent historical communist figure, e.g. 'Dimitir Blagoev', the so-called grandfather of Bulgarian communism. Kolarov elucidated the reasons why the name Hristo Botev had been chosen: the concomitance of socialist ideals and ardent patriotism.[147] Chervenkov explained that the radio station:

> …was called after Botev, because once again, as 70 years ago, the Bulgarians had to gather their forces and to fight valiantly for their freedom, which had been suppressed, and their independence, which they had been deprived of.[148]

'Hristo Botev Radio Station' appealed to 'Bulgarians! Patriots!' Names of national heroes were given to the underground radio stations of other communist parties as well: the 'Kosciuszko Radio Station' (PPR) and 'Radio Kossuth' (MKP).[149]

Names with national connotations are also present in the partisan movement. Those of a considerable number of groups (detachments, brigades, and battalions) related to the Bulgarian national movement of the 19th century. The most frequently used names were those of Botev and Levski; there were also partisan military groups called Chavdar, Georgi Benkovski, Hadzhi Dimitir, Momchil Voivoda, Bacho Kiro and Boicho Ognyanov.[150] Neither were names of illegal partisan newspapers and bulletins an exception, e.g. 'Fatherland Appeal', 'Fatherland

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[146] A national poet and revolutionary killed in 1876 by the Ottoman Turks in an insurrectionary operation.

[147] Kolarov, *Botev Den (02.06.1942)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 397–399. Natan (1945–1946): 277–284 and 291, and Bulgarian communists in general, claimed that Botev fought for both national and social revolution.

[148] Chervenkov, *The Legacy of Hristo Botev (28.03.1942)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 214.

[149] Leading figures of national liberation movements of Poland and Hungary respectively, who married national with radical and egalitarian ideas.

[150] Guide on the Records (2000): 159–187. See, also, Kalonkin (2001): 47–49. Chavdar was a folk songs' haiduk who also figured in Botev's poetry; Benkovski was a republican and egalitarian leader of the April Uprising who was killed after its collapse; Hadzhi Dimitir was a cheta leader killed in 1868; Bacho Kiro was a teacher killed during the April Uprising; Boicho Ognyanov was a well-known hero from the famous novel of Ivan Vazov, "Under the [Ottoman] yoke".

Front', 'Fatherland' and 'Patriot'.[151] The word 'naroden' (national-people's) is common too, e.g. 'Naroden Vistanik [Rebel]', 'Naroden Glas [Voice]', 'Naroden Drugar [Comrade]', 'Naroden Partizan [Partisan]', and 'Narodna Svoboda [Liberation]'.[152] Some *nommes de guerre* of partisans were derived from Bulgarian national heroes as well as historical and literary figures.[153]

1.3.b *Use of Commemoration and Anniversaries*

Anniversaries and commemorations are moments of national uniformity, times when the entire nation suspends its ordinary, everyday duties to celebrate a memorable historical event together. During the Second World War, national anniversaries and commemorations offered a number of opportunities for political exploitation by the BCP and the Fatherland Front, since through public commemoration, the appropriation of the past into the present public sphere becomes feasible. The way in which Bulgarian communists honoured and interpreted such occasions provides further evidence of how they envisaged the nation. In the Second World War, the communists had to confront the official state selective 'remembering and forgetting', that is, the official state appropriation of the past. They therefore had to deploy their own appropriation of certain figures and events of the past rendering national anniversaries and commemorations the field of antagonistic interpretations of the past and the nation.

The Bulgarian communists juxtaposed past and present in order to justify their politics and claim that they were the true national forces in the country. They strongly criticised the so-called 'simulated' patriotic emotions of the Czar and his government. Hence, they declared themselves the original and exclusive imitators of national heroic ancestors, such as Botev,[154] Levski and the haiduks, the only credible guardians of the national pantheon and the only ones who genuinely celebrated the national past. They took Dimitrov's patriotic line of the Comintern's

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[151] BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 7; Dragoicheva (1979): 221; and Kalonkin (2001): 163 and 166.

[152] As cited in Kalonkin (2001): 163 and 166.

[153] See Kostov (1990): 198 for an account of them.

[154] See, for instance, Chervenkov, *Who does the legacy of Botev follow? (02.06.1942)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 391–393. The BCP used to speak in the name of Botev; "Bulgarian people! Botev is speaking to you!" in BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 182 (March 1943): 4 and BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 236 (June 1943).

Seventh Congress to appropriate the progressive past of the nation and to cope with the supposed falsification of history, which had been undertaken by the fascists, leading to antagonistic interpretations of the national past. On commemorative occasions, the BCP spoke about the Bulgarian nation; about what was important to it and the problems and opportunities that it faced. It defined what Bulgarians shared and Bulgaria's position in the world. It spoke about Bulgaria's history, language, and economy. It sought to define the symbols of the Bulgarian nation and the features of the Bulgarian national identity.

The Bulgarian communists made considerable use of national anniversaries concerning figures of the national liberation movement of the 19th century, of which Botev and Levski were the most prominent. Botev represented the "leader of the Bulgarian national movement, the immortal tribune of national uprising against the foreign yoke, the proud apostle of South Slav unity".[155] In a proclamation on the day of Botev's anniversary, it was argued that if Botev had been alive in the Second World War, he would have been hanged by the Gestapo and the foreign Czar Boris.[156] The day of Levski, with particular respect to his ability to build secret revolutionary committees, as partisans did, was also honoured. Levski was still alive:

> …for 70 years, Levski crosses the enslaved fatherland… In every corner of the fatherland he sets up and organise a revolutionary committee to struggle against home and foreign despots—chorbadzhis and Turkish serdars.[157]

The commemoration of the 3rd March[158] fitted perfectly with the BCP's politics, as it offered the opportunity to underline the unity of the Bulgarian nation and the affiliation of Bulgaria with the Soviet Union.[159] The BCP challenged the Bulgarian people to be 'honourable descendants of Botev, Levski, and Benkovski'. Just as their ancestors had done in the 19th century, the Bulgarian narod had to expel foreign occupiers from the country and overthrow the treacherous government.[160]

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[155] Chervenkov, *Hristo Botev (01.06.1944)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 7): 15.

[156] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 236 (June 1943).

[157] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 178 (February 1943). Serdars were commanders-in-chief of the Ottoman army.

[158] The day of the San-Stefano Treaty anticipating a large Bulgarian state.

[159] BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 27 (1942) and B.C.P. Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 143 (1942).

[160] BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 27 (1942): 1.

Deprived of any right and ravaged, the Bulgarian narod had to fight for its own national, political, economic and cultural freedom.[161] In a proclamation concerning the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Bulgaria from the Turkish yoke,[162] the Russians are mentioned as liberators of Bulgaria; in this sense, Bulgaria's affiliation to the USSR by means of a national day was highlighted.

The 24th May was another key date; an orthodox feast-day for Saints Cyril and Methodius, which the communists interpreted as celebrating Slav culture and solidarity.[163] In the proclamation of 1942 with regard to this day,[164] it was argued that the two saints, who were brothers, had provided all the Slav nations with the alphabet and literature. With regard to Bulgarians, in particular, they had "saved them from assimilation during the five centuries yoke, they had equipped Paisii, Levski and Botev with nib and sword to achieve Bulgarian renaissance and liberation". In addition, the authors of that proclamation compared the early literate Slav nations to the then undeveloped, in terms of civilisation, 'Teutonic hordes'. In modern times, the latter "had reduced themselves to a higher race" in order to "physically and culturally extinguish Slavdom". The BCP accused the treacherous governments of Hitlerist agents of systematically refraining from the public celebration of Cyril and Methodius Day, because they sought the Germanisation of the Bulgarians. The authors appealed to Bulgarian citizens to align themselves instead with the Russian nation, the pioneer in the struggle for "the salvation of the Slav alphabet and culture, peace and civilisation". This view of the national and cultural prominence of Cyril and Methodius's mission emanated from the national line of the late 1930s and was in complete contrast to the earlier thesis of the so-called 'ultra-sectarians' who derided this holiday as chauvinistic.

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[161] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 143 (1942): 1–2.

[162] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 182 (March 1943): 4.

[163] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 240 (May 1942) and B.C.P. Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 202 (1943): 4. See, also, Chervenkov, *Towards the Celebration of the Brothers Cyril and Methodius (21.05.1942)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 345–347.

[164] BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 240 (May 1942): 4.

1.3.c *Partisan Songs*[165]

Music and verse has proved to be a successful propaganda tool for diverse regimes. It could be argued that in the resistance movement there were no sharp distinctions between the 'artist' and the 'audience', since the partisan 'artist' did not hold a significant position in society. Historically, even though the composers of partisan songs were individuals, the partisan community as a whole appropriated and sang these songs. For socially subversive movements such as resistance movements, partisan songs were an important vehicle for achieving a sense of unison by forging a contemporaneous community. A partisan-imagined community consisting of partisans themselves, helpers (the so-called 'yatatsi' in Bulgarian) and sympathisers, was institutionalised through music. Even if they had never met each other, all would be singing the same songs, or at least songs with the same philosophy,[166] which gave them strength and courage to endure the hardships of partisan life. Partisan songs eliminated the isolation that resulted from the dispersion of the partisan detachments.

Bulgaria was not unique in this respect. Schwarz shows how Russian musicians and poets responded to Hitler's attack in 1941 by producing many nationalistic songs in which they vowed to defend their country.[167] As Chang-Tai points out, the CCP also made wide use of songs intertwining nationalism with a socialist perspective.[168] This topic is prominent in the partisan songs of other communist resistance movements in the Balkans. The anthem of ELAS clearly demonstrates that the resistance army fought for both national and social emancipation as well as for well-being ("Go ahead, ELAS for Hellas,/justice and freedom");[169] the same motif recurs in Macedonian partisan songs ("in the last, the most glorious struggle/for narod, for the fatherland and for a new world").[170] Nationalistic lyrics divided the social structure between the people and a principally pro-German power bloc rather than between the proletariat and the bourgeois class.

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[165] For a thorough analysis of common topics of Bulgarian, Greek, and Macedonian partisan songs, see Sygkelos (2008).

[166] Sources do not help in measuring the impact and popularity of the Bulgarian partisan songs.

[167] Schwarz (1983): 181 ff.

[168] Chang-Tai (1996): 901–929 *passim*.

[169] *The Anthem of ELAS*, in Gazis (1986): 11.

[170] *Youth March*, in Ristovski (1974): 45.

In all Balkan partisan songs, the subject was the nation rather than the proletariat. The national character of partisan songs was even more pronounced, since they drew on the folk tradition of oral poetry and reflected the themes and styles of older kleftic or haiduk ballads.[171] Words such as communism or socialism and their derivatives never appeared; they were not even implied. National and democratic demands, rather than overtly communist or more radical ones, were put forward.[172] While they may not have been a potent propagandist tool due to the limited popularity of the resistance movement, Bulgarian partisan songs represented the BCP and the Fatherland Front as political formations devoted to the fatherland and democracy.

The songs of the partisans presented themselves as descendants of the national heroes of the Bulgarian national movement of the 19th century.[173] The lyrics of a very famous partisan song are revealing: "He who loves an enslaved narod/and preserves a great legacy/-Levski's revolutionary legacy-/may he come to us as a soldier".[174] In another song, the sequence of figures from celebrated national heroes to Dimitrov linked the resistance with the national liberation more tangibly: "There, Botev stands up furiously for his rights/there, Levski is in a meeting in the darkness/Dimitrov, pale and in chains/they make an appeal to the workers".[175] Elsewhere, there are direct associations of resistance with the national liberation movement: "The Land of Botev and Levski/is under yoke once again/Haiduk songs are restlessly sung/ on mountains once more".[176]

A struggle for land and narod, an inseparable struggle against foreign conquerors and local traitors, for both national liberation and social welfare are presented in partisan songs. The lyrics of a famous partisan song, 'Partisan March',[177] illustrate this further:

> Wave you, great flag/of the Fatherland Front!/ Let's throw ourselves into the battle/*for land and narod*[178]—No more gloomy German yoke,/

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[171] Van Boeschoten (1991).

[172] Sygkelos (2008): 200–204.

[173] "Brave partisans/descendants of Levski, Botev/Stefan Karadzha", lyrics of *Srednogorians do not put up with yoke*, in Stoin (1955): 84.

[174] *Chavdartsi*, in Stoin (1955): 61 was an anthem-like of one of the most dynamic partisan groups.

[175] *Soldier and booklet*, in Hanchev (1954): 14.

[176] Cited in Dragoicheva (1979): 146–147.

[177] It was the most popular song in the 'Hristo Botev' partisan group, in Andreev (1947): 45.

[178] Italics are mine. Social and national claims are connected.

> no more hard to bear famine-/fight against the German executioner,/ fight against your traitors.

The word 'freedom' acquires both national and social meaning: "Freedom is near today,/stand up and fight, country!/Death to black fascism,/freedom to narod".[179]

Partisans were presented as national and social heroes. With little equipment, they flocked to the mountains to fight for national liberation and a new, fair society. Heroism, glory, patriotism and bravery were attributed to their daily struggle through partisan songs. Patriotism and social vision took precedence over affection for family, even if the latter was the subject.[180] Love for the fatherland is openly declared in a number of partisan songs; lyrics such as 'for our Bulgaria'[181] or lyrics that refer to devotion to the country[182] appear frequently. The concept of Bulgaria takes on a pure and sacred meaning, which has to be preserved at all costs.[183]

1.3.d *Word and Symbols*

Further evidence of the BCP's national discourse can be found in partisan oaths. Dochev and Iliev recount the necessities of such oaths: discipline, an understanding of the significance of the struggle, self-sacrifice, and moral and psychological incentive.[184] The same authors cite that, although some partisan groups developed their own statutes, the common position was outlined by the 'War Instruction to Partisans', established by the War Committee of the Central Committee of the BCP; therefore, oaths presumably shared certain elements in common.[185] A centrally decreed oath elaborated by the General Staff of the NOVA in the spring of 1943 explicitly conflated nationalist and

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[179] *Partisan March,* in Andreev (1947): 45. See, also, *There is dense fog* and *Start singing for freedom*, in Bakarelski (1961): 596 and 597 respectively.

[180] "A partisan cannot stay with his mother/…/and loves his/her beloved fatherland", in *A partisan cannot stay with his mother*, in Stoin (1955): 70.

[181] *It is impossible to put up with fascists* and *Dark cloud appears*, in Stoin (1955): 75 and 92 respectively.

[182] "Oh, how much I yearn for revenge/…/for Botev and for you, my fatherland" from the poem *On my gun*, in Andreev (1947): 18.

[183] "Thus, the fascist yoke,/mother, let's crush,/the Bulgarian name/we must preserve pure", from the song *Farewell*, in Stoin (1955): 67.

[184] Dochev and Iliev (1974): 85.

[185] Dochev and Iliev (1974): 80.

internationalist aims.[186] Other common elements of oaths are as follows: devotion to the fatherland and the Bulgarian narod, war against fascism and its local agents, revenge on Bulgarian traitors, the linkage of the resistance with the national liberation movement of the 19th century,[187] and respect for the programme of the Fatherland Front, in order that Bulgaria be free, independent, democratic, powerful and prosperous.[188]

Nationalist topics can also be detected in political lectures and instructions given in meetings with people in villages and cities and on commemorations. There, the conflation of the national and international character of the resistance movement is evident too. Not surprisingly, the partisan movement is seen as a sequential part of the struggle against the Turkish yoke and Bulgarian chorbadzhis. The following discourse, taken from a partisan captain's speech to local peasants, is revealing:

> …Comrades, today is the day of narod's leaders of national revolution. Their great achievements were once successful thanks to the support that our brother, Russia, gave. The soul of the fighters of [the] April [Uprising], who fought bravely against the Ottoman army, is still alive in us. The uprising begun on this mountain and your village had a very close relation to this uprising.[189]

In addition, a historical narration of linear advance is developed: from the national liberation movement against the Ottoman yoke to the yoke of capitalism that followed and the uprising of September 1923.[190] It was implied that the narration of the nation would herald the advent of a glorious future, as the socialist vision anticipated.

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[186] "For the liberation of the fatherland and the world from Hitlerite conquerors and their Bulgarian agents", in Dochev and Iliev (1974): 86.

[187] During the ceremony of taking the oath of new partisans, a partisan captain spoke as follows: "it seems to me that an echo of our oath reached Oborishte, a small valley where our grandfathers, also, kissed guns (it was a part of taking the oath) and swore to give their life for narodna (national-people's) freedom", in Dochev and Iliev (1974): 99. Andreev (1981): document 2 cites the following extract from the "Oath of insurrection": "following the legacy of our great narodni (national-people's) fighters, Botev and Levski, we swear…".

[188] See, for instance, the oaths of some partisan groups, such as 'Hristo Botev', 'Anton Ivanov', the Razlokian partisans and, also, the oath of the NOVA, cited in Andreev (1981): 3–4 and 14 and documents 1, 2 and 4. See, also, BCP Records Fund 93, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 64; BCP Records Fund 92, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 1; BCP Records Fund 130, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 2; and *Partisan Oath (15 June 1944)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 7): 100–101.

[189] Kolev (1964[3]): 199–200.

[190] Speeches of partisan captains often told this story, Andreev (1981): 2–3.

With regard to symbols, the partisan movement adopted the national flag in parallel with the red one. For instance, the First Sofia National Liberation Brigade opted for the red flag, having inscribed it with the words 'Death to fascism, Freedom to narod', side by side with the tricolour national one, with the inscription 'For a free, powerful and democratic Bulgaria'.[191] In sources of that time, there are frequent references to the 'tricolour flag of the Fatherland Front';[192] therefore, the national tricolour flag of Bulgaria and the flag of the political organization of the Fatherland Front, in an abstract manner, became united. Thus, the Fatherland Front claimed to represent the entire Bulgarian nation and that all of the 'honest and true Bulgarian patriots' would join it. Consequently, whoever did not join the Fatherland Front, was a traitor, or at least not a patriot.

1.3.e *Key Elements of the Nationalist Discourse of the Resistance Movement*

Most of the key elements of the BCP discourse had a common denominator: association with, and appropriation of, the national liberation movement of the 19th century against the Ottoman yoke.[193] As a result, a whole set of interesting parallels of national significance stem from this association: Bulgarian governmental institutions and chorbadzhis, partisan and haiduks, or, to all intents and purposes, heroes (patriots) and villains (lackeys), Red Army and Russian Army. Within this framework, the resistance could gain a strong national profile.

First and foremost, a firm dividing line distinguished the enslaved, starving, financially deprived nation[194] from the power bloc presented as serving the alien conqueror. Parallels were drawn between the so-called fascists in governmental positions, the high ranking officers in the police, army and administration of World War Two, and chorbadzhis, the Bulgarian-speaking feudal notables of the Ottoman era.[195] Capitalists, bankers, and contractors such as the chorbadzhis and wholesalers of the 19th century, it was suggested, had never fought

[191] Andreev (1981): 21 and Dochev and Iliev (1974): 98.
[192] For instance, see Lambrev (1944) *passim*.
[193] The semi-clandestine publishing house 'Nov Svyat' (New World) published many books on national heroes and the April Uprising during 1941–1943, Dragoicheva (1979): 409.
[194] *Damned Fascists*, in Burin (1970): 214–215.
[195] *A mother cries for her son* and *Plea to Vapcharov*, in Stoin (1955): 140 and 63 respectively.

for the fatherland; on the contrary, they had betrayed it.[196] The police of the treacherous Bulgarian government of 'German agents' was described as a 'yenitserian police gang'.[197] Such an outline, it was calculated, would reinforce the communists' negotiations with the so-called anti-fascist bourgeois parties and political figures.

It was claimed that the partisans fought for national liberation and independence, as the haiduks were supposed to have done in the Ottoman era.[198] It was stressed that treacherous Bulgarian governments faced haiduks and partisans alike.[199] Using the legend of haiduks, the Fatherland Front repeatedly pointed out the closeness between the partisans and the masses, which needed to be developed. As Bulgarian villagers supposedly assisted and associated with haiduks during the era of the Bulgarian Renaissance, the masses were presumed to support the partisan movement. Thereby, the partisan movement could be divided into two branches: the fighters on the battlefield and their helpers ('yatatsi'), who mainly provided them with food and shelter. Under the flag of the Fatherland Front, partisans were bound to repeat the feats of haiduks Botev and Levski[200] leading Bulgaria to its second liberation.[201]

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[196] Significantly, Chervenkov, *Who does the Legacy of Botev Follow? (02.06.1942)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1951, vol. 2): 391–393 broadcast: "Filov and Penchovich, together with Shakir Bei and Kyochyk Said hung Levski; they are brothers".

[197] Naroden Voice #1, June 1944, in Lambrev (1944): 8 and *Appeal to Bulgarian narod*, in Lambrev (1944): 84. The yenitsars were part of the Ottoman army and administration. They came from the non-Muslim population by the devsirme, a levy of non-Muslim children for conversion and Ottoman service.

[198] The haiduks were considered by the BCP to be formed by people who sought to take revenge on the Ottomans. Afterwards, they were assumed to lead the Bulgarian national liberation movement. See, for instance, BCP Records: Fund 1, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 295 (1944). See, also, *Haidukian nights*, in Andreev (1947): 19, in which the way of life of partisans corresponds to the way of life of haiduks (in terms of relationship with nature and mountain, fun, song, appearance); *Chavdartsi*, in BCP Records, Fund 135, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 33; *Farewell*, in Stoin (1955): 67; *Mountain and partisans*, in Bakarelski (1961): 595.

[199] "…sons of Bulgarian traitors, as one-time 'Dunav', newspaper of chorbadzhis and Turks,…called our blessed memory chetniks—'villains', 'idles',…, so now in newspaper 'Zora'…traitor Krapchev discredits our patriots. And remember: the same people utter the same words", in B.C.P. Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 40 (1943).

[200] Chervenkov, *Let's Follow the Example of our Immortal National Heroes and Leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival (13.08.1941)*, in Radio Station 'Hristo Botev' (1950, vol. 1): 44–46 appealed to the Bulgarians as descendants of Father Paisii, Sofroni Vrachanski, Rakovski, Karadzha, and Levski.

[201] BCP Records: Fund 65, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 7 (March 1944). Some lyrics from the *March of the Bulgarian Insurgents* are revealing too: "…our beloved bandit

The Bulgarian communists overplayed the kinship with Slavs in order to kindle the traditional fraternal feelings of the Bulgarian people for the great Slav nation, the USSR. Even anti-communists harboured pro-Russian leanings in the belief that the Slav kinship would facilitate Bulgaria's survival after the war.[202] In this context, the Red Army was expected to contribute to the liberation of Bulgaria from Germany just as the Russian army contributed to the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman yoke.[203] However, Czar Boris's consistent refusal to declare war on the Soviet Union, or even to sever diplomatic relations with her, hindered the BCP from engaging in a potential political argument on the anti-Russian or anti-Slav conduct of the government. The Soviet Union had declared war on Bulgaria just a few days before the Communists took power.

At the beginning of the Second World War, the BCP faced a challenging situation. With the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the expansion of Nazism and the fear of an eventual collapse of 'the motherland of all the workers', became major threats to the international communist movement and contributed to the prioritization within the latter, and the BCP in particular, of defeating Nazism. Thus, the objective aim of the Bulgarian communists was, in the first place, the survival of the Soviet Union and then, once this had been accomplished, the victory of the Red Army and the preparation of conditions favouring a takeover in Bulgaria.

To navigate this difficult situation and to strengthen itself, the BCP deployed two main strategies: it set up a People's Front and it conducted an anti-imperialist struggle at both an international (against the fascist Germans) and a national (against the so-called German agents of Bulgaria) level. Within this overarching strategy, it developed

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[haiduk]/ has woken up from a deep sleep/and listen to his fighting hymn [being sung by partisans]", in BCP Records: Fund 77, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 31 (August 1944).

[202] See, for instance, Stainov's view during a debate with other non-communists on the post-war fate of Bulgaria: "let them cut our heads, but…the Russians will guarantee our existence as a state", cited on a letter of Dramaliev to Dragoicheva, in Dragoicheva (1979): 224. See, also, Georgiev's arguments that bolshevisation was less evil than national catastrophe and that only the USSR might back and assist Bulgaria, in Dragoicheva (1979): 240 and 308 respectively. These were significant reasons for them to join or assist the Fatherland Front.

[203] *Damned Fascists*, in Burin (1970): 214–215 and *Plea to Vapcharov*, in Stoin (1955): 63. See, also, Naroden Voice #3, June 1944, in Lambrev (1944): 39.

a series of tactics: a resistance movement to attack Germans and their so-called agents, connections with the Red Army and the Balkan resistance struggle, broadcasting, and attempts to manipulate and usurp anniversaries. The Bulgarian communists opted for a nationalist discourse to underpin their politics. They developed binary divisions of patriots versus traitors; they gave names with national connotations to their political or military apparatuses; they articulated their nationalist discourse on the occasion of commemorations and anniversaries, through music and verse, oaths, symbols, texts and speeches, the press in a clandestine form, and radio broadcasts from the USSR. The BCP took power on 9 September 1944, after the Red Army entered Bulgaria and following a number of strikes, public demonstrations and partisan operations. Henceforward the BCP had to transform itself from an underground, clandestine political formation into a central element within the Bulgarian government and articulate a state discourse.

The Party's discourse, as it had been developed and elaborated during the resistance movement, constituted a very valuable pool of concepts related to the national idea. The Party converted commemorations, for instance, from an opportunity to criticise its opponents into nation-wide official celebrations. Recommendations, slogans and proclamations, which used to be clandestine, acquired a state nuance. "Rabotnitsesko Delo", the Party's newspaper, became a governmental political organ and sought the consent and discipline of the narod. The political enemies and former persecutors of the Party were denounced as if they had led Bulgaria to an unprecedented national disaster in the Second World War. New enemies were presumed to have emerged in the post-war period, who allegedly conspired with hostile nations pursuing intervention in Bulgarian domestic affairs against the interests of the country and the people. Bulgaria, since 9 September 1944, had been a People's Democracy, *national in form and socialist in content*, but also, as is demonstrated in the following chapters, national in content as well.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

The early post-war period in Bulgaria (1944–1948) has been analysed to a limited extent and interpreted in different ways. A number of authors (namely Isusov, Bell, Kalinova and Baeva, Crampton, and Ognyanov)[1] have suggested several factors to explain the communist take-over and consolidation of power.

Cold war teleology used to present the stationing of the Red Army in Bulgaria up to December 1947 and the backing of the BCP by the Soviet Union as a catalyst that transformed Bulgaria into a satellite state. Although decisive to the course of post-war events, the Soviet presence cannot adequately explain the huge expansion of BCP membership and, in some cases, the enthusiasm of the masses for the communists. As Abrams (2004) has suggested, the Cold War version of the immediate post-war period, which overestimates the Red Army's backing of the communists, is delusive; on the contrary, communists in many European countries enjoyed significant support. Nor did the communists rely solely on Soviet tanks; they also embarked on a struggle to gain consent.

In addition, several accounts have rather overemphasised the so-called 'Red Terror' involving repression, violence, intimidation of non-pro-communists and bloodshed; wholesale purging of the army and the police has been similarly overestimated. Although a determinant, authoritarianism was desperate for propaganda. Indeed, all violent and authoritarian regimes have sought persuasive discourses in order to gain the consent of the masses. Death sentences and coercion could rather be seen as part of a more general pattern of symbolic discourses.

Effective communist politics (such as authoritarian control of key-ministries; control over the police, the army, and the judiciary; the first stage of a quasi-pluralist 'people's democracy'; and communist success

[1] Isusov's (2000) book is one of the very few that examine this period on its own. See, also, Bell (1986): 79–96; Kalinova and Baeva (2002): 49–72; Crampton (2002): 52–66; Ognyanov (1984): 8–13 and Ognyanov (1993).

in the political struggle against the opposition) have also been suggested to make the communist seizure of power comprehensible. However, they still need an effective discourse and means of propaganda to come into effect.

Furthermore, a set of political and moral advantages of the communists (such as legitimacy, maintenance of party structure and function all gained from the resistance movement in concomitance with significant prestige gained by the victory of the USSR and the Red Army) have also been argued. It is questionable, however, whether a party, clandestine for a long period and without any governmental experience, would have used the above factors very successfully.

Additionally, the huge support that the BCP gained after the war and the mushrooming of Fatherland Front committees is an interpretation that, though romanticised by pro-communists, is less convincing. Were social demands for reforms, justice, and democracy, in concomitance with the political corrosion of traditional right-wing parties and the acute exacerbation of socio-political contradictions, sufficient to make Bulgarians join the BCP in large numbers? Were they the reason why the left-wing radicalism of Eastern European societies took on a communist tint? Why did it happen in this specific period and so suddenly?

All of the above factors did play a crucial role in the political life of Bulgaria in the post-war years. This chapter complements the existing literature as it explains why and how the communists set out to win the hearts and the minds of the masses and reach compromise and alliance with other political forces. As they seized power as the hegemonic force of a coalition of diverse political forces, the communists required consent as much if not more than coercion.

In order to realise its hegemonic project the BCP articulated a central, ambitious, systematic and extensive nationalism in a series of political domains. This chapter describes the political situation that the BCP had to navigate: the political parties of that time are briefly presented (their position, social composition, membership, support, and ideology, including their own national discourses which competed with those of the communists, as well as the potential dangers they posed for communist hegemony); the impact of international agreements on Bulgarian politics is examined; communist advantages and disadvantages are discussed; and the tactics the communists used to weaken and marginalise serious rivals are illustrated. Within this political framework, it is argued, the nationalist discourse deployed by the BCP

was a central factor in legitimising its regime, in gaining the support of the masses and political allies, in keeping the Fatherland Front united, and in navigating domestic and international political antagonism.

This chapter also examines the extensive nationalist discourse the communists constructed, recasting and recombining in a syncretic manner central discursive elements from earlier discourses: a bourgeois nationalist and a communist one. It analyses the self-presentation of the BCP as a national party which claimed to have sacrificed itself for the nation rather than as a party representing a part of the nation. It analyses the communist efforts to promote the Fatherland Front in an explicitly nationalist way. The nationalist discourse of the BCP can also be found operating in particular political domains crucial to the communist regime: the economy, security apparatuses, governance, and the judiciary. Finally, this chapter shows how this nationalist discourse was used in the elimination of the opposition and in politics concerning the ethnic 'other'.

2.1 *The Political Spectrum in Post-war Bulgaria*[2]

The BCP was faced with opposition across the political spectrum, to its right and to its left. On the right, there were ultra right-wing organisations, the Democratic Party (DP) and the Zveno; the latter had already joined the Fatherland Front. The centre of the political spectrum was occupied by the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU), the Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party (BWSDP), and the Radical Party, all of which consisted of allies of the communists within the Fatherland Front coalition. As left, centre, and right-wing groups had been formed within the above parties, during 1945 two parties were established under the same names: one pro-communist, which remained within the Fatherland Front, and one which split off and set up an independent opposition party. Apparently, a united Fatherland Front was all-powerful and unchallengeable, but split or disunion put communist supremacy in danger. On the far left, there were Trotskyist and anarchist groups. To navigate challenges posed by this composite political reality and keep the Fatherland Front united, both objectives crucial for the survival of communist hegemony, the Bulgarian

[2] Appendix 1 provides short accounts of parties and organizations mentioned in this section.

communists used nationalist discourses to appeal to and win the support of diverse social strata of Bulgarian society contested by other political forces, and to represent the BCP as a party that embraced the whole nation and strived for national interests. In this effort, the communists had to counter nationalist discourses articulated by antagonistic political parties.

The ultra right-wing opposition consisted of illegal anti-communist organisations, such as the 'Neutral Officer', the 'Czar Krum', the 'Military League', and the IMRO. They had a limited membership consisting largely of army officers and the main focus of their propaganda was anti-Sovietisation; the restoration of the Tirnovo Constitution as a means to obstruct the communist advance; and a Western-style republic.[3] All the ultra right-wing organisations deployed nationalist discourses: they demanded unification of all Bulgarians within the same state and asserted the primacy of 'national culture'. They insisted on the Bulgarian origin of the Macedonians, *territorial integrity* (opposition to the unification of Pirin Macedonia with the People's Republic of Macedonia), and the sovereignty and independence of the Bulgarian state.[4] Even though these organisations were very small, they constituted a threat to communist power, since they had developed associations with the Army and were seen as having the potential to mount a coup if the Army was not purged and its loyalty to the communists ensured.

The political representative of the moderate right-wing opposition was the DP led by Mushanov and Girginov, which developed out of the legal opposition to the pro-German dynasty and governments of the Second World War. Its leaders were blamed, however, for their participation in the last government, which only lasted one week, before 9 September and were tried for this, as we shall see, by the People's Courts. Its membership fluctuated between 1,000 and 2,000 people.[5] In the elections of October 1946, the DP gained 22,736 votes (0.5%).[6] As had been the case after the First World War, all right-wing political tendencies were discredited as they were seen as responsible for Bulgaria's weak domestic and international situation and because

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[3] Isusov (2000): 208 ff.

[4] See "The trial…" (1947): 60 (examination of Major Hadziatanasov) and 121–122 (examination of Colonel Ivanov), and Ognyanov (1993): 108–109.

[5] Kumanov (1991): 131–132 and Isusov (2000): 195, 246. See Appendix 3, Table 7.

[6] Bell (1986): 95 and Appendix 3, Table 6.

they had either collaborated with the Nazis or had not significantly participated in resistance movements. Last but not least, post-war societies demanded reforms and social justice, a fact that turned them to the centre and the left. The political programme of the DP involved liberal demands, such as the right to private property and the restoration of the Tirnovo Constitution, as well as pro-American slogans.

Zveno (Link) was a very small organisation with a history of involvement in coups and strong relations with the Army, which were of crucial importance to the communists. Indeed, the success of the 9 September upheaval was, to some extent, due to Zveno's connections with the War Minister, Ivan Marinov,[7] and officers of the General Staff, such as General Stanchev.[8] In contrast with Communist Parties elsewhere in Eastern Europe, such as the MKP and the KSČ, which agreed to nominate as Prime Minister a representative of parties enjoying widespread popularity,[9] the Bulgarian communists accepted Georgiev—the leader of Zveno, an imitator of Mussolini and an adherent of corporatism in the 1930s—as Prime Minister. Zveno also participated in the first cabinet council with three other Zveno members. After 9 September 1944, it changed its name from 'Zveno-19 May', which recalled the date of the coup in 1934, to 'National Union Zveno'. Its membership fluctuated between 30,000 and 40,000 people, while its electoral support was tiny.[10] In the post-war years, Zveno attracted officers, intellectuals, landowners, merchants, industrialists, and white collar workers.[11]

The ideology of Zveno had a number of themes in common with that of the communists: populism, democracy, unity of all progressive forces, the idea of Balkan Federation, étatist centralism, planned economy, and industrialisation.[12] On the other hand, however, Zveno was in support of private property, harmony among classes, and a kind of society-friendly capitalism.[13] It saw the new era as a bourgeois democratic

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[7] Afterwards, instead of being tried as a collaborationist, Marinov was appointed Commander in Chief of the Bulgarian army during the Fatherland War, Isusov (2000): 19–21. See, also, Tzvetkov (1993): 263–265.

[8] Dragoicheva (1979): 588–624 passim.

[9] In Hungary from the Smallholders' Party and in Czechoslovakia from the National Socialist Party.

[10] Isusov (1983): 246, and Appendix 3, Tables 6 and 7.

[11] According to accounts given by Ostoich (1967): 35, the social composition of Zveno was as follows: landowners: 62.57%, white-collar workers: 10.39%, artisans: 7.16%, merchants and industrialists: 6.53%, and workers: 3.62%.

[12] Isusov (2000): 69–72 and Minchev (1988): 187–188.

[13] Minchev (1988): 106.

revolution to be led by the proletariat, which would restore civil rights and establish a social liberal political system in Bulgaria.[14] Zveno subscribed to aspects of the communist party ideology but clearly did not share any enthusiasm for the establishment of a 'Soviet regime' in Bulgaria.[15] Zveno's nationalist discourse mainly consisted of slogans for the freedom and independence of Bulgaria and a bright future for the Bulgarian people; and claimed to defend the interests of the entire Bulgarian nation.[16] Communist nationalist approaches contested those of the Right in the struggle for the soul of the nation and aimed to gain allies conducive for control of military apparatuses.

The Radical Party (RP) re-emerged in September 1945 but immediately split. The pro-communist RP (led by Kosturkov) joined the Fatherland Front, whereas the RP-united emerged after the right-wing of the party (led by Genov) decided to establish an independent opposition party. Both had very small memberships, were of liberal political character and attracted mainly artisans and white collar workers.[17]

While Zveno and the RP were of low dynamics, BANU posed a serious political threat to the hegemonic project of the communists. In the still predominantly agricultural societies of Eastern Europe, agrarianism, which had been popular since the inter-war years,[18] jeopardised the political predominance of the communist parties.[19] In Romania, for instance, the strongest opposition party was the National Peasants' Party of Maniu and in Poland, the Polish Peasants' Party of Mikolajczyk. In Bulgaria, then, BANU proclaimed itself the genuine heir of the very popular Stamboliski-led BANU,[20] which had formed one of the most popular governments in the history of modern Bulgaria after

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[14] Minchev (1988): 90.

[15] Similar to the National Socialist Party of Czechoslovakia, Zveno considered the political structure established after 9 September 1944 to be the end of possible revolutionary changes, while the communists viewed it as the beginning, Tomaszewski (1989): 66.

[16] Isusov (2000): 70, 79 and 118; Minchev (1988): 99.

[17] Ostoich (1967): 35.

[18] The Czechoslovak Peasant Party, for example, had been in power for much of the inter-war period; the Romanian Peasant Party governed Romania between 1928 and 1933.

[19] In the USA, the Agrarian Committee (Zemedelski Komitet) had been founded in the summer of 1947. Its leaders included not only G.M. Dimitrov, but also leaders of the agrarian parties of Eastern Europe, and other political groups antagonistic to the communist parties; Isusov (2000): 339, footnote 257.

[20] After 1923, as BANU of Stamboliski had collapsed, a lot of agrarian groups emerged claiming to be its heirs. For more details, see appendix 1.

the First World War. Before its split (in the summer of 1945), its membership had been increasing dramatically, so BANU was the only party able to compete with the large membership of the BCP;[21] it might have duplicated its popularity of 1919–1923, because the political situation was in some ways similar: a political crisis after a disastrous war, generating demands for a social transformation. BANU had gained considerable influence over the peasant masses as a result of its strong agrarian orientation. All social strata of peasants became members of it and BANU claimed to be the political representative of all peasants.

As BANU drew on Stamboliski's policies, it found a lot in common with the communists: agrarian reform, expropriation of capitalists' private buildings and town estates for public use, nationalisation of natural sources and banks, the setting up of People's Courts for war criminals, educational reform, peaceful foreign policy, understanding between Balkan peoples, Slavophil tendencies, and friendship with the Soviet Union and the Western democracies.[22] Its most promulgated slogan was 'peace, order, legality, and freedom'.[23] However, its core ideology differed from that of communism; BANU professed an agrarian populism, advocating agrarian-cooperative syndicalism, possession of private peasant smallholdings, economic democratisation based on labour private property, and democratic rights according to the Tirnovo Constitution.[24] It also deployed a national discourse claiming to be the "national stronghold of the dignity of powerful and prosperous Bulgaria".[25] BANU supported slogans for national unity and national independence; it stressed its own sacrifices for Bulgaria's national liberation from the Germans.[26] As long as the BANU retained its unity and loyalty to the Fatherland Front, common elements augmented the communist project, while differences could be neutralised.

In summer 1945, however, BANU split; a pro-communist BANU remained in the Fatherland Front and an opposition BANU was founded by Nikola Petkov, which was to become the most influential

[21] Its membership rocketed from 92,875 at the beginning of 1945, when the BCP approached 250,000, to over 300,000 in mid-1945, when the BCP had grown to 400,000 members; it also enjoyed massive support in villages, in Isusov (2000): 53–54 and Minchev (1988): 127. By this, we could suppose that BANU had the dynamics to cover its handicap with regard to the membership of the BCP.

[22] Bozhkov (1980): 22–27, Minchev (1988): 88 and 186, and Isusov (2000): 55–60.

[23] Isusov (2000): 53.

[24] Ionescu (1969): 107–110, Isusov (2000): 57, and Minchev (1988): 109.

[25] According to the first circular letter of BANU, cited in Isusov (2000): 52.

[26] Isusov (2000): 57.

opposition party. After the split, most of BANU's membership preferred to remain within the ranks of part of the governmental coalition[27] but the popularity of the opposition BANU seems to have exceeded that of its pro-Fatherland Front counterpart. Despite the latter's threefold greater membership,[28] the opposition BANU gained a greater percentage of the vote than its rival in the 1946 elections. In the elections of 27 October 1946, the opposition BANU led the opposition Bloc, which gained 28.0%,[29] while the Fatherland Front BANU gained 13.2%. Furthermore, the circulation of the opposition BANU's newspaper was ten times that of the pro-Fatherland Front's publication.[30] The political influence of Petkov's BANU is evident by the fact that at its conference in October 1944, when BANU was united, the pro-communist left-wing of the party had been insignificant.[31]

An independent agrarian party did seriously threaten communist power in an overwhelmingly agricultural country,[32] where agrarian slogans were very popular amongst the Bulgarian peasants. The BCP could not recruit peasants via land redistribution,[33] as its counterparts had done in Romania and Hungary.[34] An uncontrolled agrarian party would have opposed communist plans for collectivisation, as the great majority of peasant smallholders owned their land, in contrast with pro-communist BANU arguably challenged as communist stooges. Lampe argues that peasant owners of smallholdings had no desire to give up their lands voluntarily.[35] Indeed, only 13% of arable land had been transformed from private peasant smallholdings into collective farms by 1949. Taking the agrarian factor in the political life of Bulgaria into consideration, the communists adopted a range of essentially liberal measures, unique in post-war Eastern Europe. Despite

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[27] Isusov (2000): 127.

[28] Appendix 3, Table 7. The BANU of Petkov reached its peak membership in December 1946 (64,558), in Isusov (2000): 284.

[29] It should not be considered a low percentage, provided that the elections were not free.

[30] Seton-Watson (1950): 214.

[31] Isusov (2000): 55–60. Isusov (1975): 52 points out that G.M. Dimitrov and the right-wing of BANU enjoyed a considerable influence in 1944.

[32] Appendix 3, Tables 2 and 3.

[33] As there was no extended land for redistribution, only 3.6% of total arable land was redistributed to private smallholders and collective farms, in Lampe (1986): 125.

[34] After the Agrarian Reform in Romania, 822,170 ploughmen received redistributed land, Tappe (1950): 8. In Hungary, land was distributed among some 640,000 small or new farms, Wiskemann (1950): 103.

[35] Lampe (1986): 124.

communist plans for immediate and swift collectivisation,[36] it was decided that not all of the holdings needed to be contributed to the collective farm and the collective would pay the former owner rent for the land that was used.[37] These two provisions were designed to attract voluntary members into the collectives.

The opposition BANU threatened communist power for more specific reasons. First, although there were similar political goals, as has been shown, the opposition BANU was very critical of the authoritarian character of power exercised by the communists (especially the authoritarianism of the Ministry of the Interior and People's Militia), and the Sovietisation of Bulgarian social life. It emphasised the peasants' reluctance to accord their lands to collectives and opposed 'military communism' applied to the outright requisitions in 1945–1946, handled by the People's Militia.[38] The opposition BANU was seen as uncompromised by those seeking alternatives to fascism or communism. It could also satisfy people's demands for social change without frightening them with Sovietisation. To overcome such challenges, to overshadow its ultimate end, that is Sovietisation and an authoritarian regime, and to corroborate the communist regime, the BCP articulated an ambitious nationalist discourse able to represent it as a national hegemonic force.

The Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party (BWSDP), a member of the Second International, was the descendant of the party from which the communists had split, when their party first turned to Bolshevism. The BWSDP had 854 members (3.25%) in the Fatherland Front in December 1944. Its social composition was mainly white collar workers and employees (mostly teachers and civil servants), artisans, and petty bourgeois rural strata.[39] The first post-war political declaration of the BWSDP focused on socialism, nationalisation, and democratic rights, and advocated close relations, first with the Soviet Union, and then with Western countries. The BWSDP expected the Fatherland Front government to apply socialism in a way that was consistent with Bulgarian conditions, and not with the Soviet model.[40]

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[36] Lampe (1986): 125 notes that the delivery of thousands of tractors from the USSR had been arranged before the end of the Second World War.
[37] Lampe (1986): 125.
[38] Lampe (1986): 125–126.
[39] Ostoich (1967): 35, Isusov (1975): 51, and Bell (1986): 87.
[40] Minchev (1988): 99–100.

The issue of whether the party would follow an independent policy (Pastuhov, Lulchev) or cooperate with the communists (Neikov, Popov) led to a split in August 1945. The pro-communist BWSDP declared its loyalty to the Fatherland Front and to Marxism. The BWSDP-united, to be distinguished from its counterpart in the Fatherland Front, was led by Lulchev and advocated socialism along the lines of the Labour Party in the UK. As with BANU, the opposition party appears to have had a much smaller membership than that of the Fatherland Front,[41] but may well have been more popular. According to non-communist evidence, its newspaper had a wider circulation than that of its pro-Fatherland Front counterpart.[42] Before the split the centre group had been predominant, and the pro-communist left-wing was the minority.[43] The Bulgarian communists represented the united Fatherland Front as an overwhelmingly national union, which genuinely represented the ideas and the interests of agrarian and social-democratic followers. In doing so, it sought the consent of all social strata and major political affiliations; a convincing discourse that the Fatherland Front served their interests and echoed their ideas was therefore necessary. A national discourse could be readily presented as of common interest and value.

The left-wing opposition to the Fatherland Front government consisted of the 'Proletarian Communist Union–Bulgaria, Trotskyists', some other very small Trotskyist organisations of mainly local character,[44] and the 'Federation of Anarchist-Communists of Bulgaria'. Both Trotskyists and anarchist-communists had supported the Fatherland Front government in its very early stages. Afterwards, they became fiercely critical of Fatherland Front policies. The Trotskyists criticised the BCP over the militarism of the People's Army, the function and structure of the People's Militia, the process of nationalisation, and the function of the courts.[45] The Anarchist-Communists opposed any kind of power (capital, state, or church); they supported the immediate socialisation of land, industries, and mines as well as the federal organisation of society.[46] The existing evidence of these political formations

[41] In September 1946, the loyal to the Fatherland Front numbered 31,529 members, whereas the BWSDP (united) numbered 2,214, in Isusov (2000): 246.
[42] Seton – Watson (1950): 214.
[43] Isusov (1975): 50–51.
[44] Isusov (2000): 170–171.
[45] BCP Records Fund 191, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 62: 5.
[46] BCP Records Fund 272, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 1 (1945).

is quite limited, although it appears that anarchist groups did exist in a considerable number of areas.[47]

2.2 *Disadvantages and Advantages of the BCP*

Before we further discuss one of the major advantages of the BCP, that is its national discourse, we need to investigate other considerable advantages as well as disadvantages that the communists might well have encountered by developing a nationalist rhetoric. The BCP appeared to be by far the strongest party of the early post-war years. However, even within the Fatherland Front, before the fission of the BANU, the BCP was not unchallenged, as communist members numbered slightly more than half of the Fatherland Front.[48] In reality, as occurred throughout Eastern Europe, the BCP only became all-powerful after 1947, when it launched a harsh offensive against, and finally eliminated, the opposition. Significantly, even the largest and most powerful communist party of Eastern Europe, that of Czechoslovakia, had strong rivals. In the autumn of 1945, when communist membership rose to over 700,000, the Populist Party (weaker than the Social Democratic Party) had 350,000 members. At the same time, the Democratic Party gained over 60% of the electorate in Slovakia.[49]

The BCP's membership immediately after 9 September 1944 was quite low (13,700 members).[50] This was a common fate for all communist parties in countries where a large resistance movement had not developed. Significantly, the KSČ which had around 90,000 members in 1937, before it went underground, numbered only 37,000 members at the very beginning of the post-war period.[51] The MKP, clandestine and very small in the inter-war period, numbered just 3,000 members.[52] Furthermore, the Bulgarian communists had little experience of open political competition in the public sphere, as they had been clandestine

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[47] Isusov (2000): 140–141.

[48] 53.80% in December 1944 and 56.12% at the beginning of 1945, in Isusov (1983): 24 and 95 respectively. For the Fatherland Front membership, see Appendix 3, Table 1.

[49] Tomaszewski (1989): 62–63 and 68. In other countries, such as Hungary, the communists were much weaker. In the elections of 1945, the Smallholders' Party gained 57%, while the communists gained just 17.1%.

[50] Isusov (1975): 49 and Ognyanov (1993): 17. Avramov (1965): 9 cited a report of Kostov giving the figure of about 15,000, whereas Dimitrov estimated 25,000 members, in Dimitrov (1949): 79–81.

[51] Suda (1980): 189 and Lukes (1997): 245.

[52] Molnar (1990): 100.

for a long period; therefore, they did not have sufficient experience of winning support through parliamentary means.

A significant disadvantage for the BCP was that Bulgaria remained an overwhelmingly agrarian country, so the BCP could not appeal to a large proletariat. The industrial labour force was estimated at 15% in 1946, whereas the population dependent on agriculture was estimated at 66%.[53] A discourse centred on the proletariat would thus not be able to reach or appeal to a substantial part of the Bulgarian society. At the same time, appeals to the communist feelings of workers themselves were unlikely to be very successful, as only a small percentage of workers were party members.[54] Significantly, the percentage of workers who had joined the BCP by the end of 1944 was 10.62% in Sofia, and 14.23% in Plovdiv district, with its peak in Gabrovo district (24.72%) and its nadir in Blagoevgrad district (4.16%).[55] Even more paradoxically, discourses based on the proletariat did not have a large audience within the BCP itself, as the workers constituted less than 30% of communist membership.[56] The non-working class majority of communist members would not support the BCP if the latter did not develop a discourse addressing broader social strata. For all these reasons, a Marxist discourse was losing ground,[57] while a national discourse proved to be preferable.

As well as competitive opposition parties and groups, and practical and theoretical difficulties intrinsic to the BCP's political regimentation, domestic circumstances and international agreements also laid serious strategic obstacles in the communists' path to power. The post-war government had to reckon with economic difficulties, such as unemployment,[58] lack of raw materials, industrial decline, price

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[53] See Appendix 3, Table 2 and Table 3.

[54] For the low percentages of communist workers, see Avramov (1965): 15–16. Worker members of the BCP in January 1945 numbered 53,090, while in 1948, 119,064, in Bell (1986): 81 and Isusov (2000): 367. Bulgarian workers in 1946 numbered in total 638,249, in Todorov (1981): 453. This roughly means that worker communist membership never exceeded 20% of the total industrial labour force.

[55] Isusov (1971): 140. For more details see Appendix 3, Table 4.

[56] Bell (1986): 81 and 131. For the social composition of the Party's membership, see Appendix 3, Table 5.

[57] Even zealous Yugoslav Marxists made ideological and tactical compromises for the sake of the peasantry, as Bokovoy (1998) has argued. The KPD's leadership faced difficulties similar to those of the BCP, since new party members had no knowledge of Marxism; for this reason, German communists estimated that integration of new members had to be achieved in a national manner, Kiepe (2009): 471.

[58] Lampe (1986): 133 gives evidence of 38,000 of industrial unemployed workers or over 20% of the industrial workforce. As the BCP had promised the elimination of

increases, a widespread black market, poor harvests due to lengthy droughts (1945–1946), misery and serious food shortages causing the starvation of a considerable percentage of the population, especially in urban centres.[59] A Marxist party that claimed to be the vanguard of a specific class would hardly have convinced people that it could solve multiple issues of extreme difficulties faced by the entire population.

Although some clauses of international agreements could support the BCP's attempts to eliminate some of the opposition,[60] other clauses limited its space for political manoeuvre. For instance, the Yalta Declaration (04–11 February 1945) ordaining that free elections be held in all the liberated territories, and the Moscow resolution (16–25 December 1945)[61] reinforced the political role of the opposition as well as centrifugal tendencies within the coalition of the Fatherland Front. The Moscow resolution also insisted that the Bulgarian government respect the following clauses: that a neutral person be appointed Minister of Interior; that democratic rights, such as freedom of the press be accorded; that parties which had abstained from the last elections participate in the government after a cabinet shuffle; and that free elections be held.[62] These clauses, in concomitance with the twice postponed elections (in April and August 1945) due to American intervention through the Allied Control Commission, encouraged the opposition's struggle against the Fatherland Front government and its pursuit of international support.[63]

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unemployment, the transition to the sovietisation of the economy seemed all the more urgent.

[59] Genchev (1962):187–214 and Lampe (1986): 126. Significantly, as Lampe points out, "the net value of crop and animal production for 1945–1946 fell to 60% of the 1939 level".

[60] The Moscow Armistice (October 1944) provided the Bulgarian government with the right to dismantle any fascist organisation as well as any organisation threatening the democratic rights of the Bulgarians and the political legality of the country.

[61] It had been signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, the USA, and the UK. It was the consequence of the Potsdam Conference (July–August 1945), which charged the council of the Foreign Ministers to examine the process of democratisation in some countries as presupposition for diplomatic recognition, see the relevant excerpt in Auty (1950): 33.

[62] Isusov (2000): 193–197.

[63] Isusov (2000): 179 mentions that the opposition sent a report to the Allied Control Commission asking for its intervention to solve the political crisis in Bulgaria. Lampe (1986): 122, also mentions appeals of opposition parties to the American members of the Allied Control Commission and to the US political representative in Sofia. The most significant of these was that of Petkov, who asked that the elections of August 1945 be held under international control. Tomaszewski (1989): 91–92 describes protests of Romanian opposition towards the USA.

The international situation also, to some extent, empowered the position of the opposition. For instance, since the London Conference (11 September–2 October 1945), the USA had declared that it would only participate in peace treaty negotiations with Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary if they set up democratic governments. Thus, there was a clear threat to the legitimacy of the Fatherland Front government in terms of its international recognition. This situation resulted in some concessions to the opposition: opposition parties were recognised, publication of opposition newspapers was relatively free, and new elections were to be held in all of the above-mentioned countries. More especially, in Romania, the Groza government decided on the inclusion of two representatives of opposition parties, the National Peasants and the Liberals.[64] As Swain points out, Stalin prepared to ask the Bulgarian communists to include token opposition politicians in their government,[65] but finally negotiations were inconclusive, because the opposition demanded posts that the communists would never concede. Within a challenging international environment, the maintenance of the umbrella that the Fatherland Front accorded the communists, as it included representatives from across the political spectrum, aimed to gain legitimacy for communist tactics both abroad and at home.

Such, then, were the serious disadvantages of the BCP. Yet it also had a set of significant advantages: the exponential growth of communist and Fatherland Front membership in the immediate aftermath of the war; the presence of the Red Army; control of the state sector and radicalisation of Bulgarian society. All these determinants of communist domination, though, might eventually have become disadvantages. The communist membership grew to 253,522 in January 1945[66] and swelled to 463,682[67] in 1948, bolstering the BCP enormously. All the same, a big party membership does not necessarily translate into a large electorate, as the cases of the PCI and the PCF indicate. Most importantly, the post-war BCP was essentially a new party, as 94%[68] of its members joined after 9 September 1944.[69] Newcomers did not have a Marxist/communist education when they entered the BCP, however,

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[64] Vago (1979): 122.
[65] Swain (1998): 26.
[66] Bell (1986): 81.
[67] Bell (1986): 81 and 131. Burks (1961): 51 gives percentages of the total population belonging to the BCP; whereas it was about 0.4% circa 1938, it had increased to 6.3% circa 1948.
[68] If we take into consideration its figure of 1948, then over 97% were newcomers.
[69] The membership of all communist parties of Eastern Europe dramatically increased after 1944. By 1949, a significant part of these societies had become members of the communist parties, Tomaszewski (1989): passim.

and, as reports reproduced from party archives indicate, careerism, irresponsible and lunatic acts, hooliganism, larceny, intrigue and factionalism, moral and political degeneration, and abuse of ration cards were the state of affairs on the local level.[70] Mushrooming Fatherland Front committees were not by definition under total communist domination, since, as Bell argues, "there were numerous committees that were not under communist control, nor were the communist cadres sufficiently experienced and disciplined to carry out a coordinated policy".[71]

Venev (1944), in Ostoich (1959): fig. 7.
Expose the provocateurs.
– "Comrade" Ruffian, hi!
– When have we met?
– In public security.

[70] Bell (1986): 82. The Czechoslovak communist leadership had similar practical difficulties of disseminating Marxism, Abrams (2004): 192–193.
[71] Bell (1986): 82–83.

The BCP, indeed, took advantage of the presence of the Red Army to become the major political force and achieve its goal of establishing a single-party regime. Its affiliation with the Soviet Union and the victorious Red Army reflected considerable prestige on the Bulgarian communists. Furthermore, the Red Army helped to create favourable opportunities by providing material and psychological support to communists.[72] The presence of the Red Army, however, was in some ways a problematic advantage, as anti-communists could claim that communist power relied on a foreign army and that the BCP was a Russified party alien and hostile to the Bulgarian historical tradition, Bulgarian national interests, and Bulgarian society.[73] A discourse representing the communists as the heirs to national tribune and the only force that would lead the nation to salvation could controvert such opposition claims.

The communists subtly exploited traditional features of Bulgarian political life: conformism[74] and the development of clientelist networks, as the Bulgarian government controlled the nomination of employees in all public spheres[75] (security apparatuses, schools, the army etc.). Significantly, 3,247 out of 4,385 (74%) positions in local offices were distributed to communists by the end of 1944, when the Fatherland Front was still united.[76] About 95% of the heads of primary schools and 80% of those of high schools were members of the BCP.[77] The allocation of attractive public positions resulted in a big increase in the membership of the BCP, which now attracted opportunists, careerists, and even political opponents.[78]

Last but not least, the left-wing radicalism of Bulgarian society created propitious circumstances for communist advance. As was the case all over Eastern Europe,[79] parliamentary democracy had been discredited and traditional parties were eroded. Eastern Europeans were

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[72] Crampton (1994): 212–213.

[73] See, for instance, statements of Petkov and G.M. Dimitrov that a Soviet regime had been established in the country by virtue of the Red Army, which was against the will and the interests of Bulgarian society, in Isusov (2000): 35 and 87.

[74] Every party involved in governing Bulgaria during the first half of the 20th century enhanced its membership during its running of the country; see Kumanov (1991) passim.

[75] The same was the case in Czechoslovakia, where the Party fast became the source of employment for thousands of people too. The civil service was inflated in size and filled with communists, in Grogin (2000): 133.

[76] Ostoich (1967): 76–77 and Appendix 3, Table 8.

[77] Ognyanov (1993): 63.

[78] Avramov (1965): 17–18 gives examples of fascists (Tsankovists) and anarchists.

[79] For a detailed analysis, see Abrams (2004): 9–36.

deeply disaffected due to: corrupt, abused, and clientele electoral systems; authoritarian right-wing regimes, military intervention and fascist coups; the Great Depression, the Munich Accords and a war of unprecedented brutality. At the same time, the Red Army and resistance movements had left a great impression. Under these conditions radical left-wing programmes gained wide popularity. Eastern European societies were radicalised, as youths, proportionately more radical, politically committed and left-oriented than other age groups, made up roughly 25% of the total population. Yet preference to the communist programme over any other left-wing one was in no way given. Since the communists operated underground, they could not reach a mass audience; moreover, the 'scarecrow' of communism had been implanted into these societies.

In order to benefit from advantages and neutralise disadvantages, the communists resorted to nationalism. Indeed, discourses of national unity rather than class war could cement political institutions, whose rank and files comprised a political and social assortment of newcomers uneducated in Marxism. National discourses could minimise the image of the communist regime as alien and Soviet-imposed and could downplay the communists' dependence on the Red Army. Left-wing radicalism could become more popular on condition that it embraced the entire society instead of a single social section. To put it another way, not all were proletarians or agrarians but all were, or could at least be imagined as, Bulgarians. For these reasons, national discourses became an indispensable part of the tactics employed to secure the communist grip on power.

2.3 *Communist Tactics*

The wide spectrum and the potential popularity of the opposition to the Fatherland Front government, as well as the uncertainty of international recognition of it, show the difficult situation the BCP had to navigate. Under these circumstances, the communists were desperate to secure the unity of the Fatherland Front. After the secession of the right-wing of the non-communist parties, as also happened in other Eastern European countries,[80] the Fatherland Front was in danger of

[80] In Romania, for instance, the Social Democratic Party, the Liberal Party and the National Peasants' Party split off; in Poland, it was the Peasants' Party that split off and constituted the main opposition force to the communists, Tomaszewski (1989): 90 and 109 respectively.

being presented as a barely disguised communist organisation. Besides this, the BCP had to keep the Fatherland Front united for its own political purposes: to preserve its hegemonic role in Bulgarian political life. Under the umbrella of the Fatherland Front, the BCP could more convincingly present itself as a party defending not merely the interests of one class but the interests of the entire nation.

To secure its grip on power, the BCP adopted 'salami tactics' in order to weaken the opposition and make its elimination easier. Salami tactics became known by the policy of the MKP, which used them to slice off [bit by bit] the opposition forces.[81] Similar tactics were also deployed by the Polish and Romanian communists, who secured the support of the left-wing of parties that were to split and form opposition parties bearing the same name as their pro-communist counterpart. In this way, the communists succeeded in splitting political rivals, dividing them into a stooge pro-communist party and an opposition one vulnerable to communist attacks.

In all Fatherland Front parties, three wings were formed: a right, a centre, and a left. Within Zveno, the right-wing group (led by Iorukov) advocated independent political activities; the centre (led by Georgiev), opted for close cooperation with the Fatherland Front; the left-wing group (led by Dobroslavski and Trifonov), took a totally pro-communist stance.[82] Within BANU before its split, a right-wing (G.M. Dimitrov) developed anti-communist and anti-Soviet theses; a centre (Petkov) challenged and opposed the leading role of the communists within the Fatherland Front; a left-wing (Traikov, Obbov, Tonchev) advocated close cooperation with the communists.[83] Similar tendencies also emerged within the BWSDP.

The communists cooperated with the left-wing faction emerging in each party of the Fatherland Front coalition. Left-wing party leaders allied to the communists engaged in a fierce struggle for predominance within their own parties; of course, they were willing to acquiesce in the removal of a competing faction within their parties from political life. As the crisis in the ranks of Zveno did not cause a split, representatives of the right group were sent as plenipotentiary minis-

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[81] Molnar (1990): 110 and Gati (1994): 179–180. The slices of the Hungarian salami tactics were the leftovers of the regime of Horthy (in 1945), the right-wing of the Smallholders' Party and the Social Democratic Party (in 1946), and the centre of the Smallholder's Party with its leadership, Kovacs and Nagy (in 1947).

[82] Kumanov (1991): 129 and Isusov (2000): 72.

[83] Isusov (2000): 56.

ters to various Western countries.[84] The left-wing of BANU seized leadership of the party after exerting pressure on the Supreme Union Council to remove G.M. Dimitrov (January 1945), and arbitrarily summoned a National Conference in May 1945, which mainly elected left-wing functionaries under Obbov in the new Managing Council of the Union, without the participation of the main right-wing and centre political figures.[85] The right-wing and the centre then established the opposition BANU. The left-wing of the BWSDP attempted to form a new Secretariat (in October 1944), and then (in January 1945) compelled the strong centre group to give ground regarding changes in the composition of the Central Committee.[86]

The communists made effective use of nationalism in applying salami tactics. Their goal was to present their favoured left-wing factions of each allied party as the original leadership, claiming that pro-communist agrarians and social-democrats were genuine patriots, since they had taken part in the resistance movement[87] and remained in the ranks of the Fatherland Front coalition. Anti-communist agrarians and social-democrats were said to have engaged in a series of anti-national activities: instead of joining the resistance movement, they had cooperated with the legal anti-German opposition of the Second World War and participated in the last war government of Muraviev[88] in order to save the sinking ship of the anti-Bulgarian monarchy and bourgeoisie.[89] Even worse, they had split the Fatherland Front. As the Fatherland Front presented the only national road, and the resistance movement the only national deed, and the opposition

[84] Isusov (2000): 280. Velchev was sent to Switzerland, Popzlatev to Stockholm, Iorukov to Brussels, and Dolapchiev to London.

[85] The main decisions of the Conference were tied unity with the BCP and exclusion from the government and the Fatherland Front of all Agrarian politicians who were against the communists. Isusov (2000): 65–68 and Isusov (1975): 52–53. See also Kumanov (1991): 127.

[86] Isusov (2000): 41–44.

[87] It seems that only a section of the BWSDP under Cheshmedzhiev and Neikov participated in the meetings with the BCP for joining the Fatherland Front. Kuzmanov (1998): 225–226, 234; Kumanov (1991): 119–120; and Brown (1970): 7.

[88] The case of P. Stainov discloses the eclectic manner in which the communists dealt with opposition high rank cadres. Even though he was a member of the Muraviev government, instead of being tried by a People's Court he became minister of foreign affairs in the first Fatherland Front government, in Auty (1950): 29.

[89] Petkov was also blamed for signing 'the declaration of ten', in September 1943, which represented the legal opposition to the then Bulgarian government, in Isusov (2000): 16.

had taken no part in the resistance movement, it was argued, opposition forces had consciously put themselves outside the nation.

Communist tactics also involved a project of unbroken national unity. Such unity was most explicitly manifested at the 'All-National Second Fatherland Front Congress', convened in February 1948. There, it was declared, the Fatherland Front was transformed into a 'united people's political organisation' and an 'all-national movement'.[90] Thereby, it was argued that the Fatherland Front had accomplished the ideal of the unification of the whole nation into a single political bloc. Zveno and the Social-Democratic Party that operated within its framework were abolished; their membership was absorbed by the Fatherland Front.[91] The Fatherland Front henceforth consisted of the BCP and BANU only, symbolising the alliance of proletariat and peasants. This project of national unity encompassed the unification of trade unions and the merging of socio-political associations furthering the communist control of Bulgarian society. Through the unity of all the Fatherland Front political formations, the unity of the proletariat and the peasantry (the only classes officially recognised), the unity of the people and the army,[92] unity in all spheres of life, that is, an all-national unity, the BCP, which dominated the Fatherland Front, emerged as the *vanguard of the Bulgarian nation*.

The tactics that Bulgarian communists deployed certainly helped them to hold power. However, the communists' success in gaining absolute control cannot be thoroughly explained as the consequence of effective tactical political manoeuvres; we also need to analyse the discourse articulated by the communists in the process. As we shall see, nationalism played a key role in this discourse without which these tactics could not have worked so effectively.

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[90] Second Fatherland Front Congress (1948): 68, 72, 74 and 95. The transformation of the Fatherland Front into a 'united political organisation of all anti-imperialist forces' had been declared since 26 October 1947. For an analysis of the Second Fatherland Front Congress and for the 'moral–political unity' of the Bulgarian people see Manafov (1958): 6–14.

[91] Similar mergers took place in other Eastern European countries. In Romania, communists and social-democrats merged in the United Workers' Party (end of 1947), Tomaszewski (1989): 94; in Czechoslovakia, communists and social-democrats were united in 1948, Tomaszewski (1989): 128; in Hungary, the Hungarian People's Independence Front made up of all Hungary's political parties, the trade unions, the youth movement, the women's movement and other mass organisations (in February of 1949), Swain and Swain (1998): 53.

[92] Rabotnitsesko Delo #230, 18.06.1945.

2.4 *Self-presentation of the BCP as National Party*

Towards the end of the war, communist-led provisional governmental coalitions were set up under names with national connotations all over Eastern Europe: the 'National Liberation Committee' in Yugoslavia; the 'National Democratic Bloc' in Romania; the 'Provisional Government of National Unity' in Poland; and the 'Hungarian National Liberation Front' in Hungary. Steering such vessels, the communists claimed that a national and democratic revolution had occurred; they also declared that front governments would defend national interests, guarantee national unity and bring about a national rebirth.[93] Gottwald explained to his colleagues that "in spite of the favourable situation, the next goal is not Soviets and socialism, but rather carrying out a really thorough democratic national revolution".[94] The KSČ very cleverly connected itself to the Czech democratic tradition—Gottwald even claimed to be a disciple of Thomas Masaryk—as it was trying to link communism with Czech nationalism by capitalising on the intense anti-German feelings of the Czech people. Gati also mentions[95] a series of secret meetings between Stalin and the elite of Hungarian communist émigrés in September and October of 1944. They decided that the party was to display both its red flag and the national banner. Vas, the first Muscovite to follow the Red Army to Hungary, had the task of making the MKP palatable to, and seem representative of, the Hungarian people. It could be argued that the latter reflects a general tendency of communist parties to represent themselves as the hegemon of the nation.

One way of doing this was to give the BCP a particular history, one full of struggles for the nation, struggles which had culminated in the foundation of the Fatherland Front coalition during the Second World War. Specifically, the BCP claimed that it expressed the only, real 'Bulgarian patriotism', since it took the initiative in carrying out the resistance movement against fascism.[96] As Dimitrov stressed, the BCP and its youth had incurred the heaviest casualties in the struggle for

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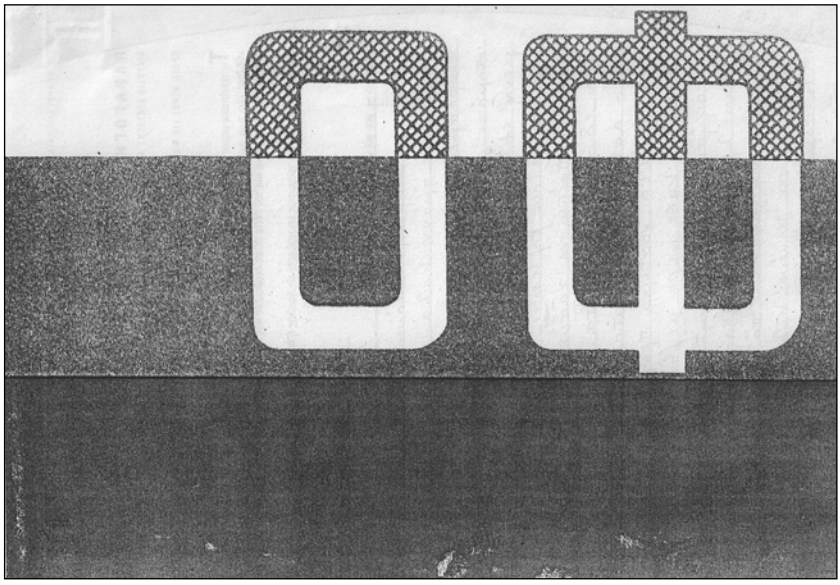
[93] For the case of the MKP see Mevius (2005): 105 and 110 and for the case of the KSČ see Abrams (2004): 181–183.

[94] Cited in Grogin (2000): 132.

[95] Gati (1994): 182–185.

[96] Many communist parties exploited their association with the Resistance in their post-war propaganda; for the PCF, see Mortimer (1977): 155.



The initials of the Fatherland Front printed on the Bulgarian flag. Fly-sheet on 1st May, Bulgarian State Records, Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 414: 4.

national liberation.[97] The bourgeoisie were presented as collaborating with German occupiers, whereas the communists had fought them. By setting up the Fatherland Front the BCP was depicted as the only force that in essence resisted the German occupation of Bulgaria and fought for national liberation.

The Fatherland Front, Dimitrov argued, represented the "common interests of the entire Bulgarian people, the Bulgarian nation, and the fatherland";[98] all those genuinely loyal to the narod now had to rally round the Fatherland Front.[99] Not only had the Fatherland Front saved Bulgaria from a terrible disaster, but it also confronted the enemies of Bulgaria, who were at the same time enemies of the Fatherland Front.[100]

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[97] Dimitrov, *All for the Front (28.11.1944)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 237.

[98] Dimitrov (1945): 9.

[99] Lazarov (1945): 2, 6.

[100] The following expression from the Manifesto to the Bulgarian narod (nation-people) from the First Congress of the Fatherland Front is very revealing: "all the disclosed and concealing enemies of the Fatherland Front, of Bulgaria" in Manifestos and resolutions (1945): 4. See, also, Rabotnitsesko Delo #236, 25.06.1945: "The way on which the Fatherland Front and its government proceeds on, is produced by the vital and lofty interests of the Bulgarian nation".

It thus claimed to be the "first genuinely national government of Bulgaria that belonged to the people".[101] The Fatherland Front also declared that it did not just constitute a temporary parliamentary alliance but a continuous, all-national union that was necessary both to "terminate the struggle against fascism and to build a new democratic and regenerated Bulgaria".[102] Therefore, it was claimed, the Fatherland Front's motives were unquestionably national.

To save the fatherland from a huge disaster and establish a truly narod's government[103] the Bulgarian communists led the events of 9 September. 9 September was presented as the revolution of all democratic and patriotic forces of the entire nation,[104] as the outcome of a successful national liberation movement,[105] and in no way a class revolution. On that date, it was declared, the Bulgarian narod was liberated from the Germans and their fascist agents in Bulgaria.[106] 9 September put an end to the policy that questioned the existence of Bulgaria as a free and independent country.[107] It constituted a temporal milestone clearly separating the past from the present. After this date, a new dawn of national life was supposed to have taken place, and the communists were identified with this dawn.

The communists declared the 'Fatherland War'[108] against Germany and fascism, the greatest national enemies of the Bulgarian nation, thus acting in the fundamental interests of the Bulgarian nation.[109] The Fatherland Front called on the Bulgarian people, who were supposedly

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[101] Rabotnitsesko Delo #230, 18.06.1945.

[102] Rabotnitsesko Delo #79, 18.12.1944 (public speech of Kostov), Rabotnitsesko Delo #98, 11.01.1945, and Chervenkov (1945, The Fatherland Front): 5.

[103] Manifestos and resolutions (1945): 7, Rabotnitsesko Delo #15, 04.10.1944, and Chervenkov (1945, For a total): 7–12.

[104] Dimitrov (1949): 41.

[105] Kostov used this definition as well despite the fact that he was speaking to BCP's members, in Rabotnichesko Delo #9, 27.09.1944. Gottwald, speaking to KSČ's members, pointed out that the most important goal of that time was to "preserve the accomplishments of the national revolution", Suda (1980): 194.

[106] In an Appeal of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front to the Bulgarian narod regarding the referendum of 1946 for the republic, it was argued that the monarchy and its governments led three disastrous wars. The outcomes of their policy were onerous reparations and disastrous obligations for the Bulgarian economy. Recommendations, appeals… (1947): 293–294. See, also, Grozev (1945): 5–9.

[107] Rabotnitsesko Delo #31, 23.10.1944.

[108] The Fatherland War is divided into two phases. During the first phase, the Bulgarian army contributed to the withdrawal of Germans from Macedonia and Serbia; during the second, the Bulgarian army took part in the Third Ukrainian Front.

[109] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unity 4 (1945): 22.

imbued with great patriotism, to fight against Germany in order to defend their dear fatherland and expel the Hitlerist bandits.[110] The Fatherland War had saved Bulgaria from an outright capitulation, long-term occupation, disarmament of the army and the loss of her sovereignty and independence.[111] Due to the communists' initiatives in conducting the Fatherland War, a new era of building a democratic and powerful Bulgaria had arrived.[112] This enabled Bulgaria to shift her wartime alliance from the Axis to the Allies; to rinse off the stigma of 30 years' pro-fascist policy; to emerge from its international isolation.[113] The countless sacrifices of the Bulgarian people meant that she could now claim to be practically a cobelligerent with the Allies in the struggle against fascism and Hitler's Germany.[114] As a result, Bulgaria would not be judged as a war criminal country.[115] She would forge relations with fraternal Slav nations and, above all, the Soviet Union. Furthermore, she would support the 'freedom-loving' nations, including Great Britain and the United States. As a result, it was claimed, the conditions for a just solution of the national question of Bulgaria had emerged.

Another area for defence of the national interests of Bulgaria was the Peace Conference. There, it was argued, Greek demands on Bulgarian territory were repelled; the amount of reparations was reduced; and Bulgaria's territorial integrity and national independence were secured. Most importantly, Bulgaria was the Third Reich's only former ally to end the Second World War with a territorial gain, after Southern Dobroudzha's incorporation. Consequently, Bulgarian communists could rejoice over a 'great victory of Bulgaria', achieved by effective diplomacy and the efficient policy of national unity at home,[116]

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[110] The Fatherland War…(1978, vol. 1): 203–204.

[111] See, for instance, Chervenkov's statement: "There is Fatherland Front, there is independent Bulgaria. There is not Fatherland Front, there is not independent Bulgaria", in Chervenkov (1945, The Fatherland Front): 22.

[112] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 7, Archival Unit 3 (September 1944): 1 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 2: 1. See also The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 1): 99 and The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 2): 339–340.

[113] Dramaliev (1947): 40. *The struggle of the Bulgarian people against fascism* (1946) was written in order to restore the honour of the Bulgarian people on a global scale after the shameful conduct of the pro-German dynasty and the war governments.

[114] *The struggle of the Bulgarian people* (1946): 98.

[115] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 7, Archival Unit 2: 1–2.

[116] Rabotnichesko Delo #229, 06.10.1946, and Dimitrov, *All for the Front (28.11.1944)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 239, and *The Fatherland Front, its Development and its Impending Tasks (02.11.1948)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 3): 159–164.

which were also projected as the reasons for the Bulgarian government's recognition by Western democracies, normalising the international affairs of Bulgaria.[117] The Peace Conference then provided the BCP with the opportunity to speak in the name of the entire Bulgarian nation,[118] as the most consistent defender of the Bulgarian national cause[119] ensuring a fair and lasting peace for Bulgaria[120] as well as achieving a 'situation of no danger' ('bezopasnost').

Overall then, the resistance movement, the establishment of the Fatherland Front, 9 September, the conduct of the Fatherland War, and the defence of Bulgaria at the Peace Conference were presented in a nationalistic light as communist achievements. Within the Fatherland Front coalition, the BCP formed the hegemonic pole, while its allies followed its policies and patriotic deeds. Following a Gramscian hegemonic strategy, the Bulgarian communists saw hegemony as a relation of consent by means of political and ideological leadership. Their hegemonic project required a 'national-popular collective will', which would keep diverse social (workers, peasants, and intellectuals) and political (BANU, BWSDP, Radical Party and Zveno) forces united in a broad coalition and, as a result, the communists would become the national representative of a wide bloc of social forces. For this reason, they constructed a nationalist discourse by merging nation, people, state, and the Party.

2.5 *Nation, People, State, and Party*

This nationalist discourse rendered the terms 'nation', 'people', 'state' and 'Party' interchangeable to a greater or lesser extent; it was all-embracing and operated in a set of key policy domains regarding the means of coercion (army, police, and judiciary), economic policies central for the Sovietisation and survival of the regime, political institutions, and, finally, the elimination of opposition. To begin with, the application of merging nation, people, state, and Party was realised in the domain of the security apparatuses, the army and the police,

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[117] Rabotnitsesko Delo #37, 15.02.1947.
[118] Rabotnichesko Delo #285, 07.12.1946.
[119] Dimitrov (1946): 8. See, also, a slogan on the elections: "Only the Fatherland Front will secure the conclusion of a lasting and just peace for our [Bulgarian] country", in Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 199 (1945): 191.
[120] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 2 (December 1944): 3.

necessary for the BCP to legitimise its regime and consolidate its power. Calling for a militia or a people's army to replace the standing army corresponds to a call for 'arming the nation', for the nation in arms. Far from being mercenary or totally dependent on professional officers, this army was supposed to genuinely fight for national ideals. In this sense, a people's army was identified with the nation.

As partisan units were converted into a national liberation army, the People's Army was essentially considered as the successor to the 'people's resistance movement'. It was said that the partisans were inspired by 'overwhelming national enthusiasm and love of their fellow-countrymen'[121] and their mobilisation into the first ranks of the Bulgarian army after 9 September 1944 was presented as a reconciliation of the army with the people. The 'new, people's, democratic and national army'[122] was depicted in complete contrast with the old 'tsarist army', since the latter had served interests 'foreign to the Bulgarian people', while the former was the first army in Bulgarian history that fought for true national interests and for both the spiritual and material progress of the fatherland.[123] To build its new character, the 'new army' had to purge all the enemy fascist elements which had conspired against the state and the nation.[124] For all these reasons, soldiers displayed a staunch patriotism and were ready to sacrifice their lives for Bulgaria. On their side, it was argued, the Bulgarian people took national pride in the 'People's Army' and, more especially, in the 'First Bulgarian Army', because it had liberated 15,000 square metres in Hungary and 30,000 square metres in Yugoslavia. In this way, it contributed to the liberation of the Balkans from the German yoke and to the final defeat of Hitlerite Germany. Marshal Stalin personally applauded its advance on the front and, most importantly, the First Bulgarian Army was proud to fight side by side with Slav nations against their eternal enemy—German aggression.

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[121] The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 1): 79–80. For the situation caused by the conscription of the partisans into the 'People's Army', see BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 22, Archival Unit 18 (September–December 1944): passim, and BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 191 (October–December 1944): 8–9.

[122] The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 1): 80 and (vol. 3): 47.

[123] Rabotnitsesko Delo #166, 02.04.1945.

[124] A considerable number of documents are related to the purge of the army: The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 1): 52–53, 62, 78, 146, 193–195 and The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 3): 43–44, 64. See also Rabotnichesko Delo #67, 04.12.1944 and #79, 18.12.1944.

Rehabilitation similar to that of the army concerned the police (People's Militia). As Dimitrov declared:

> …those who are now leading officers of the People's Militia, are persons who, together with the people, have fought for…the liberation of our country from the barbarous German yoke…They have proved that they are real Bulgarian patriots.[125]

Having been presented as fighters for national freedom partisans gave a specific national feature to the militia. The task of both the People's Army and the People's Militia was to show perfect discipline and staunch patriotism in order to support the freedom, independence and prosperity of Bulgaria, and to defend the democratic rights and interests of the people.[126] In essence, both the army and the Militia were of the nation (they were Bulgarian and served the fatherland), of the people (whom they were calling to arms, with whom they were reconciled and had complete patriotic unity),[127] of the state (they were instruments of state security), and of the Party (former partisans were placed in high-ranking positions in the army and police force).

The political hegemony of the communists would not have secured total recognition and their political power would not have been completely consolidated, without the de-legitimisation and elimination of any alternative view. Elimination of the opposition required a legitimising judicial mechanism. The communists exerted their control of the People's Courts and their decisions through the Fatherland Front and the Ministry of Justice, which appointed judges, prosecutors, and juries, who were either legally trained or devoted anti-fascists,[128] both elected by the district committees of the Fatherland Front. The People's Courts were legitimised on the grounds of the clauses of the

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[125] Dimitrov, *The People's Militia is the Unshakable Mainstay of the Democratic Government (21.01.1946)*, (1972, vol. 2): 315. A similar rehabilitation of the police took place in Romania, where Militia consisted of partisan units renamed patriotic guards, in Swain and Swain (1998): 32.

[126] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 2 (December 1944): 4 on Militia, and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 22, Archival Unit 15 (November 1944): 1 on the Army.

[127] Rabotnichesko Delo #11, 29.09.1944. In Rabotnitsesko Delo #230, 18.06.1945, the welcome given to the army on its return from the front to Sofia in a delirium of populism: the same people who had judged and punished the national traitors by the People's Courts now welcomed the army with flowers and deep emotions. Thus, the nation is conceived as a collective individual.

[128] *People's Court* (1945): 3, and Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 112 (1944): 3 and 9.

Moscow Armistice (28 October 1944), whose fourth article dictated dismantlement of all fascist organisations in the country,[129] and the denunciation of fascism[130] on international as well as national grounds.

The People's Courts were supposed to judge 'in the name of Bulgarian people',[131] while the nation was supposed to approve the verdicts of the People's Courts via public meetings.[132] They were to constitute a 'national tribunal' for the prompt and severe punishment of a small number of evil-doers who brought calamities to Bulgaria and tortured the Bulgarian people.[133] It was alleged that prosecutors and juries appointed by the Fatherland Front expressed the frame of mind and will of the people.[134] The People's Courts laid the blame for Bulgaria's war plight on the 'collaborators' of the old regime, who were now delegitimised and criminalised. In this manner, the People's Courts also contributed to the process of nationalisation[135] decreeing the confiscation of properties on behalf of the state. Entrepreneurs and bankers, if not sentenced to death or imprisonment, were deprived of any compensation as 'collaborationists' with the Axis. All 'collaborationists' were accused of being national apostates. Accordingly, the People's Courts were of the nation (in whose name they punished enemies of the nation), of the people (who were supposed to judge), of the state (which had the monopoly on justice), and of the Party (which to a great extent determined the verdicts of the courts).

In the domain of the economy, the Party-state projects of rebuilding and modernisation involved an extensive nationalist discourse. This echoes the situation in Yugoslavia, where reconstruction and modernisation went hand in hand with nationalism, as the communists appealed

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[129] Rabotnichesko Delo #39, 18.02.1947.

[130] Rabotnichesko Delo #63, 29.11.1944.

[131] This expression introduced every sentence announced by the People's Courts, *The struggle of* (1946): 109 and Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 112 (1944): 8. In a public meeting of 200,000, it has been put: "You have heard the conviction of People's Court, which is severe, but fair. This is the will of the entire Bulgarian nation", in Rabotnichesko Delo #116, 02.02.1945.

[132] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 112 (1944): 8.

[133] Rabotnichesko Delo #54, 18.11.1944, #114, 31.01.1945, and #61, 27.11.1944.

[134] Manafov (1958): 20.

[135] As Tzvetkov (1993): 308 mentions, it was very easy to accuse any businessman of 'collaboration' in a country, whose trade relations with the Third Reich had exceeded 80% of the total exchange during the war. Auty (1950): 25 demonstrates Bulgaria's considerable dependence on Germany, which, during the 1930s, had monopolised Bulgarian exports of tobacco and agricultural supplies and in return exported consumer goods and armaments to Bulgaria.

to the national pride of the people and paralleled the task of modernisation with the struggles and heroism of the partisans.[136] A rapid, nation-wide restoration of the national economy was a central task of the Fatherland Front. Reconstructing the economy was argued to be not only for the benefit of the working classes but a national concern. The 'Freedom Loan' was introduced as the key means to avoid inflation, stabilise the currency, and strengthen the economy.

During the Fatherland War, it was argued, as the nation had relied on the mobilisation of the people in the army, it had also relied on hard work at the rear to increase productivity in wartime and to develop the economy. The Fatherland Front now developed the idea of 'patriotic emulation' and the 'Freedom Loan' was promoted as a way of dealing with the vital questions of productivity and supply.[137] As Lampe notes, "the entirely internal Freedom Loan for the 1945 state budget attracted some of the remaining private funds" and contributed to consolidating the state's financial control of the Bulgarian economy.[138] Even the Trade Unions were brought to argue that the interests of the country lay above all other interests.[139]

The BCP deployed a specifically nationalistic rhetoric to propagate the Freedom Loan, presenting it as means to 'sustain our [Bulgarian] fatherland, our state, and our people'.[140] Nationalistic slogans motivated the masses to participate, such as: 'Every amount paid in for the Freedom Loan is evidence of love of the fatherland', 'Whoever subscribes him/herself to the Freedom Loan, s/he guarantees his/her own existence and that of the fatherland', and 'Whoever did not subscribe him/herself for the Freedom Loan is an enemy of the fatherland'.[141] In his broadcast speech of February 26, 1945, Todor Pavlov, the communist member of the three-member regency, called on the Bulgarian patriots to support the Freedom Loan generously. The Freedom Loan was presented as a historical and patriotic duty of the Bulgarians. Pavlov alleged that the Freedom Loan would financially empower the "new, free, independent and in terms of finance and culture progressive

[136] Tomaszewski (1989): 130.
[137] Manifestos and resolutions (1945): 9–10.
[138] Lampe (1986): 131.
[139] The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 2): 11.
[140] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 257 (February 1945): 2.
[141] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 257 (March 1945): 5.

Bulgaria".[142] The Freedom Loan was therefore an initiative for the nation (whose existence it purportedly guaranteed), for the people (who were supposed to lend to themselves), for the state (whose power it was strengthening), and for the Party (whose regime it legitimised).

Nationalisation[143] involved, by means of semantic arguments, the merging of nation and state, transferring assets into nation-state ownership.[144] It was claimed that all these assets did not just belong to the state apparatus but were the property of the nation. The BCP made nationalisation an overtly national cause. Inasmuch as the bourgeoisie was unable to secure industrial development and obstructed the rationalisation and reconstruction of the country, nationalisation was presented as an imperative need. The BCP alleged that the state undertook the control of national resources and production in order that the Bulgarian people would *themselves* enjoy the product of their toil and not imperialists and their lackeys.

Nationalisation fostered a particular state-subject relation, which Verdery calls 'socialist paternalism'. "Socialist paternalism posited a moral tie linking subjects with the state through their rights to share in the redistributed social product".[145] As production became a state affair and the state was identified with the nation through the doctrine of 'national unity', that is, the political consent of the entire nation with the will of the authority identical with the Party, production achieved a national content. Production, therefore, was an affair not only of the people but the state as well, and since 'the property of the state was a public property',[146] was simultaneously a national affair.

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[142] Rabotnitsesko Delo #136, 26.02.1945.

[143] The term 'popularisation' is found only twice, both times referring to the nationalisation of banks (populyarnite banki), in Rabotnitsesko Delo. Nevertheless, anarchist-communists used the term socialisation (sotsializatsiya) instead of nationalisation; see BCP Records Fund 272, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 1 (1945): 2.

[144] Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution, Draft Platform for the Proletarian Party (April 1917)*, (1982[4]): 35–36 mentions the nationalisation of the land, the banks and capitalist syndicates. Brokgaus and Efron's Russian dictionary of 1897 includes only the term Land Nationalisation (Natsionalizatsiya Zemli) as a linguistic loan coming from radical western European thought on land reforms, namely the transfer of land to the state. In Russian, the term Land Nationalisation was phrased in perhaps in the 1870s by the populist (Narotnik) group 'Land and Will', a member of which was Plekhanov. Therefore, Lenin and the Bolsheviks extended the term to a wider economic and social sphere.

[145] Verdery (1996): 233 note 4.

[146] Bulgarian State Records Fund 47, Inventory 3, Archival Unit 5: 20.

Insofar as nationalisation encapsulates industrialisation, it reaches the domain of modernisation.[147] Modernising Bulgaria as a state did not differ from the Soviet model of modernisation, which involved nationalist arguments. Following Stalin, the Bulgarian communists wanted to modernise Bulgaria in a short space of time and to make up for her relative backwardness vis-à-vis the industrialised West. The communist press of the time is full of references to Dimitrov's dictum that Bulgaria had to achieve in 10 years what other countries achieved in 100 years.[148] As King shows, the PCR used patriotic rhetoric to achieve its objectives with industrialisation in premier position.[149]

Modernisation in general and nationalisation in particular presupposed high productivity. Increasing productivity was presented as a patriotic task,[150] especially in a period when low wages and considerable urban food shortages led state factory workers to leave their jobs to help cultivate the family smallholding and thereby assure their own food supply. As a result, Lampe argues that the communist regime was facing a long-term threat to coal and metal production and also a discipline crisis.[151] Within this context, hard work was interpreted as a patriotic act. Shock-workers were supposedly inspired by an ardent patriotism;[152] the initiative of the local committee of Pernik's miners to work on Sundays was seen as a patriotic deed;[153] and fast and efficient harvesting was viewed as a sign of staunch patriotism and patriotic emulation.[154] In the same vein, architects, engineers, and technicians were asked to perform their duty to the fatherland.[155]

Tasks of modernisation grounded in nationalist arguments gave rise to the new term 'patriotic merchants and industrialists'.[156] The BCP thus appealed to the traditional class enemy of the proletariat; similarly, Czechoslovak communists referred to 'elements of the bourgeoisie

[147] Although she dates étatist communism to the 1950s, Todorova (1993) gives a theoretical account of how nationalism and state communism became ideologies and tools of modernisation.

[148] It was also argued that industrialisation in concomitance with collectivisation would save Bulgaria from financial calamity, in Lazarov (1945): 11–13.

[149] King (1980): 127.

[150] See, for instance, a slogan in Rabotnichesko Delo #33, 25.10.1944: 'Praise to working men–patriots: textile workers increased production'.

[151] Lampe (1986): 134–135.

[152] Rabotnichesko Delo #78, 09.04.1946.

[153] Rabotnichesko Delo #224, 01.10.1946.

[154] Rabotnitsesko Delo #168, 24.07.1947 and Rabotnitsesko Delo #123, 27.05.1948.

[155] Rabotnitsesko Delo #111, 13.05.1948.

[156] See, for instance, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 41.

amenable to socialist development'.[157] This hybrid concept reveals the inconsistencies and paradoxes brought about by the BCP's compromises to nationalism. In achieving national unity and pacifying Bulgarian society, the communists had to bind together a bloc of diverse social strata. More especially, a national discourse could gain the consent of merchants and industrialists regarding nationalisation and reduce political conflicts for the BCP. Indeed, private industry posed serious problems for the communist's programme to consolidate economic power, as the war years had accelerated the inter-war tendency towards an increasing number of smaller and smaller firms,[158] which unlike large-scale industries, could not be tainted by charges of collaborationism. Furthermore, confiscation on the grounds of collaborationism was minimal in a number of industrial branches.[159] Since these small firms were not a likely basis for the modern large-scale industry the communists envisaged, the BCP appealed to the national consciousness of merchants and industrialists to gain their consent and eliminate as far as possible any potential conflict.

After the Stalin-Tito conflict, the BCP itself criticised concepts such as 'honest merchants' and 'patriotic industrialists'. Then, Dimitrov recognised categorically the Stalinist doctrine of a prompt transition to socialism, that is, transition through 'class warfare' and without compromises with hostile classes. The founding congress of the Cominform had elaborated important modifications to the political and tactical line adopted by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. According to Gati, the reasons for this were: Stalin's doubts about the spectre of 'incipient diversity' in international communism, Gomulka's relative independence, Yugoslav successes, and the impasse in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.[160] By the end of 1948, the term 'people's democracy' came to be identified with the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The 16th Plenum and the 5th Congress (July and December 1948

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[157] Trotskyists reproached the BCP with applying "class co-operation and narrow-minded patriotism" instead of "irreconcilable class struggle and revolutionary internationalism". BCP Records Fund 191, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 67 (1946): 1 and BCP Records Fund 191, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 62: 3. For the KSČ see Abrams (2004): 196.

[158] Lampe (1986): 132.

[159] For instance, textile firms taken over during 1945 accounted for less than 9% of the joint-stock capital in the branch; see Lampe (1986): 134. According to Auty (1950): 49, in spite of measures of nationalisation, 61.3% of the national income was still in private hands in 1948.

[160] Gati (1994): 189.

respectively) of the BCP applauded the Sovietisation of the Bulgarian political system and the intensification of the class struggle, while peaceful transition to socialism and the concept of a patriotic merchant and industrialist were considered illusions, caused by the slow annihilation of the opposition.[161] The concept of 'patriotic industrialist' was abandoned, because the BCP now 'understood' that an industrialist could never be patriotic.

According to this theoretical framework, the economy became at one and the same time an affair of the nation (which was supposed to be the possessor of nationalised assets), of the people (who were to realise and enjoy nationalisation and modernisation), of the state (which administrated nationalisation and modernisation), and of the Party (which administered economic projects). Interestingly, using expressions such as 'nationalisation of *our* industry', '*we* have no more than 500 enterprises of more than 50 workers', and 'industry should come under the authority of *our* state',[162] the communists embarked on what Billig calls 'homeland deixis'[163] simultaneously attributing the first person plural to the nation, the people, the state, the government, and, as the circumstances were, to no lesser degree to the Party.

In the domain of political institutions, the abolition of monarchy and the proclamation of the People's Republic; the new so-called 'Dimitrov Constitution'; and the government itself all assumed a largely national character. To begin with, the referendum ballot of the People's Republic depicted the Bulgarian national flag, whilst that of the monarchy was merely a piece of white paper with the words 'for MONARCHY' in black lettering.[164] Dimitrov argued that the ballot of People's Republic represented a salutary one for the fatherland.[165] Consequently, everyone who cast his/her ballot for the People's Republic voted for Bulgaria. It was also claimed that contrary to the old Tirnovo's Constitution, which placed the Czar at the centre of power, the

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[161] Dimitrov (1948): 9–18 and Dimitrov (1949): 48–49, 52–53. This shift of the political line in the communist parties was more dramatic in other countries, like Poland, where Gomulka, who supported a peaceful transition to socialism and ruled out forced collectivisation, was unseated from the position of the Party's secretary.

[162] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 33 (1947): 225–226.

[163] Billig (1995): 105–109.

[164] See both of the ballots in the Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 216 (June–September 1946): 100 and 102.

[165] Dimitrov (1946): 30. A similar example of discourse on the anti-national character of monarchy could be found in Yugoslavia, where the Yugoslav Assembly blamed King Peter for having supported Nazi collaborators, in Tomaszewski (1989): 129.

new 'Dimitrov Constitution' recognised the people or the nation (which had become coterminous), as the holder of power, i.e. the state, whose soul was, in effect, the Party.[166] Finally, as Kolarov argued, "whoever attacks upon and offends the Fatherland Front and its leader, at the same time attacks upon and offends the Bulgarian people",[167] since the Fatherland Front government ruled on behalf of the interests of the people and the nation. In this way, the Fatherland Front became inseparable from the Bulgarian people. Thus it was not presented as a government of an ordinary party, but the government of the nation, of the people, of the state and, of course, in effect, of the Party. Therefore, as we shall now see, any opposition to it became coterminous with national treason.

2.6 *National Enemies*

In the domain of party politics, the BCP based the incrimination and elimination of all opposition outside the Fatherland Front on, *inter alia*, national grounds. Arguing that the nation was in constant danger, and having identified itself with both nation and people, the communist regime assumed the protection of the country. Despite the fact that 9 September had supposedly marked the transition to a new, bright period, communist propaganda gave firm warning of impending threats to the freedom, independence and financial prosperity of the Bulgarian nation. In particular, the country was in danger of a German attack,[168] while the Bulgarian army were warding off the German enemy in the country and the Balkans; sabotage, treason, and conspiracy of fascist elements in the administration and the army jeopardised the country's stability and further development;[169] and provocative whispers, spread by fascist elements, aimed to create unrest in Bulgaria's interior.[170]

Dangers seemed to threaten Bulgaria after the Fatherland War as well. Fascist reactionaries and financial speculators were allegedly

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[166] Rabotnitsesko Delo #110, 16.05.1947.
[167] Rabotnitsesko Delo #27, 04.02.1948.
[168] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 7, Archival Unit 3 (September 1944): 1; Rabotnichesko Delo #1, 18.09.1944 and #59, 24.11.1944; and The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 1): 145,192; ibid. (1978, vol.2): 25–26 and ibid. (1978, vol. 3): 34.
[169] The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 1): 61, 99, 192; ibid. (1978, vol. 2): 11; and ibid. (1978, vol. 3): 34.
[170] Rabotnitsesko Delo #31, 23.10.1944.

"preparing a systematic, internal and external, attack upon the Fatherland Front in order to obstruct its historical mission saving and regenerative for our fatherland [Bulgaria]".[171] Speculators and profiteers, who had exploited the situation created by the Second World War to make money, were said to have caused artificial difficulties (price increases, inadequacy of market products, and inflation) in order to discredit the Fatherland Front government. Both reactionaries and capitalists tried to manipulate opposition groups to disrupt the Fatherland Front or to penetrate its ranks. Dimitrov added to these dangers those of invasion by Turkish troops, civil war, a complete economic disaster, a coup and conspiracies, and the danger of foreign intervention.[172] This made it seem self-evident that Bulgaria needed a political force that would save and protect her and rendered the elimination of elements that threatened the nation imperative.

In the first set of show-trials, 'fascists and collaborationists', who, in the most vital interests of Bulgaria needed to be severely dealt with,[173] stood trial in the People's Courts. Tomaszewski explains how a social conflict could take a national dimension: a capitalist or a landowner who asked the Nazi authorities for help in dealing with his fellow citizens during the war (e.g. in the event of a strike), was, after the war, considered a collaborator and harshly punished.[174] All over Eastern Europe (with the marked exception of Poland, where no pro-fascist or quisling administration had been formed), fascists and collaborationists were disenfranchised and heavily punished. In Yugoslavia, Mihailovich and his Chetniks were charged with fighting alongside the Germans.[175] In Albania, people who had developed contacts with Italian authorities were tried.[176] In Hungary, all politicians around Horthy and the Arrow Cross were accused of collaboration with the Third Reich and the People's Courts were used to condemn the old order.[177]

Fascists and collaborationists were not presented as enemies of the proletariat or communism, but as *national* enemies, who had led the

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[171] Rabotnitsesko Delo #236, 25.06.1945 and Lazarov (1945): 3–4, 7, and 10.

[172] Dimitrov, *The Fatherland Front will win, in spite of everything (25.10.1946)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 434 and *Our National Development is moving toward the destruction of the capitalist exploiter system and the emancipation from every imperialist dependence (03.01.1948)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 3): 135.

[173] Rabotnichesko Delo #101, 15.01.1945.

[174] Tomaszewski (1989): 65–66.

[175] Swain (1998): 23.

[176] Tomaszewski (1989): 57.

[177] Mevius (2005): 105 and Gati (1994): 188.

nation to the brink of a huge national disaster. They were found guilty of the following anti-national activities: that they had been allied with the German imperialists, who plundered the national wealth of the country and put Bulgaria in danger of national destruction;[178] that they had waged war against the USA and the UK; and that they had turned Bulgaria against her historical ally, the Soviet Union. The eradication of fascists was proclaimed a national task of Bulgaria,[179] since the condemnation of fascism would be evidence that Bulgaria had joined the freedom-loving coalition and broken with her past. Equally, her international prestige would be elevated, after those guilty of violence, atrocities, and looting in Macedonia and Thrace were severely punished.[180] Thus, Bulgaria purged herself of international crimes committed by the old regime, which at the same time was condemned as anti-Bulgarian. The condemnation of the old regime had long-term effects: in the second set of show-trials much incrimination of groups and individuals stemmed from their actual or alleged ties with the so-called fascist war governments.

In the second set of show-trials, former allies of the communists, who had eventually split the Fatherland Front, were accused of committing serious crimes against the nation and were de-legitimised, incriminated, and eliminated. More especially, the opposition was attacked for trying to deprive the nation of its democratic rights and for weakening Bulgaria's fighting capacity; for being a foreign agency committing high treason by serving the interests of American imperialism or enemy nations neighbouring Bulgaria, i.e. Greece and Turkey; and for being a nest of national apostates plotting foreign intervention. By means of mass meetings and fierce press campaigns,[181] the communist regime attempted to totally morally disqualify the opposition, so that it could no longer be recognised as a legitimate form of politics.

To begin with, the opposition was charged with fomenting conspiracy against the Republic and vested democratic rights. In this sense,

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[178] Rabotnichesko Delo #61, 27.11.1944 and Rabotnichesko Delo #73, 11.12.1944.

[179] Kolarov, *National tasks and renovation of Bulgaria (1944)*, in 'Radio Station Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 7): 294.

[180] Chervenkov, *The Fatherland Front Government (11.09.1944)*, in 'Radio Station Hristo Botev' (1952, vol. 7): 273, Rabotnichesko Delo#61, 27.11.1944, and Rabotnichesko Delo #73, 11.12.1944.

[181] Defendants of the Hungarian Opposition faced similar accusations and tactics, Mevius (2005): 171–173.

the opposition was accused in a series of trials of becoming the focal point for attraction for the fascist remnants of the past[182] and of including in its ranks national apostates,[183] who had harmed the national interests of Bulgaria in the past. The Bulgarian government had supposedly been entrusted with the task of prohibiting in the future "the existence of political, military or semi-military organisations, which aimed at depriving the nation of its democratic rights"[184] by an 'anti-national'[185] coup. Since the old regime had been blamed for national catastrophe, the Republic was identified with the nation's bright future, and since the violation of democratic rights implied assault upon the nation, what would be interpreted as conspiracy against the communist regime was understood as national apostasy.

In addition, the opposition was incriminated for undermining the army's discipline and weakening its fighting capacity. As shown above, in conducting a patriotic war, the 'People's Army' was sanctified as the defender of Bulgaria's interests. According to a decree issued by the General Staff of the NOVA, "everybody who attempts to perturb, disarray and cause disorder in the army, is the people's enemy and traitor".[186] G.M. Dimitrov and his followers were accused of instilling anti-national and defeatist activity in both the front and rear during the Fatherland War.[187] Petkov was accused of undermining army discipline by sowing seeds of discord in the ranks and thus weakening the fighting capacity of the country.[188] Agrarian slogans for peace were also challenged as adverse to the national interests of the country. Basically, the opposition was charged with undermining the army, that is, the defender of the nation.

The opposition was also accused of committing national treason by serving the interests of Bulgaria's international enemies. The opposition in general was denounced as an agency of dark, foreign forces and of sworn enemies of the Bulgarian nation, i.e. the 'agency of the aggressive

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[182] The trial (1947): 7.

[183] Rabotnichesko Delo #26, 02.02.1947.

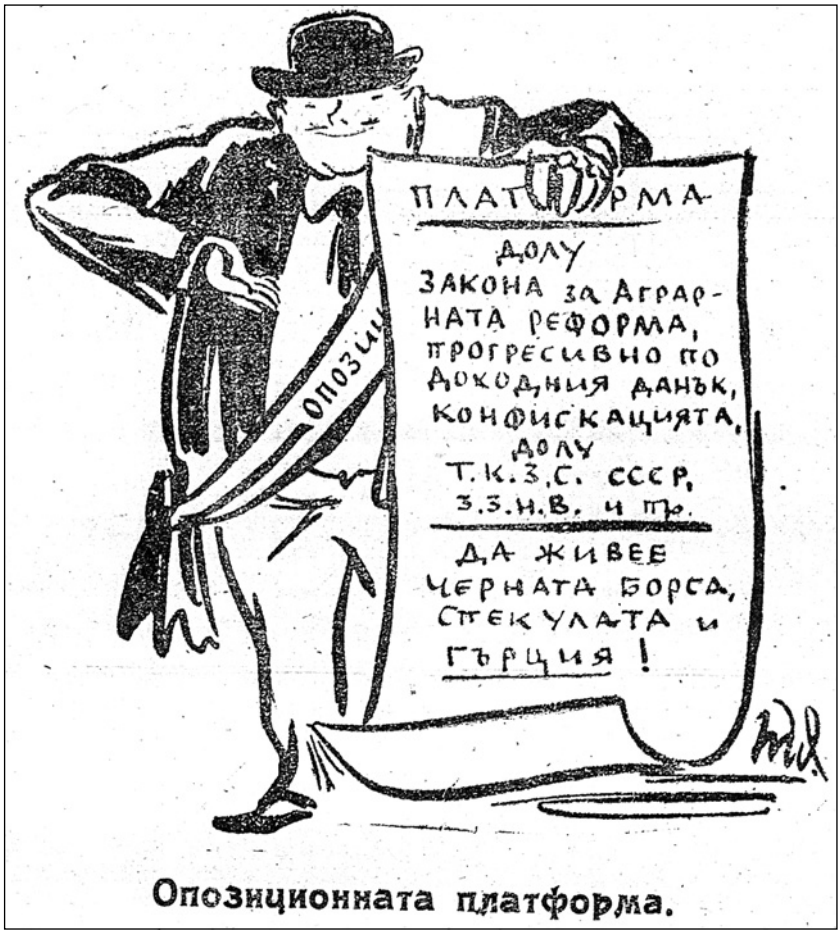
[184] That is how Dimitrov reasoned clauses of Bulgaria's Peace Treaty had been signed.

[185] The truth (1947): 14.

[186] Hristov (1969): 185.

[187] The trial (1947): 12 and Isusov (2000): 208.

[188] The trial (1947): 22 (indictment). Pastuhov, also, faced a similar indictment, Isusov (2000): 207. About Pastuhov see, also, Rabotnichesko Delo #49, 06.03.1946, and Rabotnichesko Delo #62, 21.03.1946.



"Opposition Platform: Down with the law on the Agrarian reform, confiscation, collectivization, the USSR -Long Life to the black market, speculation, and Greece", in Bulgarian State Records, Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 242: 141.

imperialists' or the 'Greek monarchist-fascists'.[189] Dimitrov in particular depicted the opposition as heralds who were playing to the tune of foreign music and not that of the Bulgarian national bagpipes.[190] At the level of Great Powers, opposition politicians were accused of seek-

[189] Rabotnitsesko Delo #241, 20.10.1946.
[190] Dimitrov (1945): 8, and Dimitrov, *The Fatherland Front is a lasting militant alliance of all democratic forces (11.03.1945)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 245.

ing backing from the "imperialist powers and of being the unconcealed agency of American imperialism",[191] whenever they advocated an independent Bulgarian international policy of equal approach to the East and the West or total subordination to the capitalist camp. Opposition leaders, such as Petkov, Cheshmedzhiev, and Lulchev, were said to rely on the support of international reactionary circles, according to the indictment of Petkov's trial and the lawsuits against military and semi-military organisations.[192] Pastuhov and his followers were deemed military and political intelligence agents of Anglo-Saxons imperialists.[193] Petkov was officially denounced in his trial for seeking to alienate and isolate Bulgaria from the Slav nations, the USSR, and the other democratic nations. In parallel, it was alleged that he aimed to create dissension between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in order to please the imperialist camp. In doing so, he undermined the 'really national foreign policy of the Fatherland Front government'.[194]

With regard to the Balkans, the opposition was accused of facilitating 'Greek and Turkish aggression' against Bulgaria, as these nations belonged to the 'imperialist camp' and were considered to be enemies of Bulgaria. Petkov and his followers supposedly furnished the arguments of Greek (Tsaldaris and Damaskinos) and Turkish rulers, who sought to annex vital parts of Bulgaria's 'national edifice' in their countries.[195] In show-trials BANU members and followers were charged with espionage and serving the Greek intelligence service, by passing on information of a political and military character; with organising secret channels to negotiate the ceding of Bulgarian territory to Greece; and with setting up subversive groups.[196] The opposition were called 'Greek maniacs' ('girkomani')[197] and it was claimed that their political fatherland was Greece.[198]

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[191] Dimitrov, *Political Report of the Central Committee to the First Congress of the BWPc (19.12.1948)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 3): 294 and 307–308.

[192] The trial (1947): 11–12.

[193] Rabotnitsesko Delo #32, 09.02.1947.

[194] The trial (1947): 376 and 379 (Prosecutor Petrinski's speech).

[195] The trial (1947): 366 (Prosecutor Petrinski's speech); Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 199 (1945): 147; Dimitrov, *Towards a nationwide victory over reaction and the ill-wishers of New Bulgaria (15.11.1945)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 259; and Rabotnichesko Delo #84, 16.03.1946.

[196] The trial (1947): 31–32, 38 (indictment); 363–364 (Prosecutor Petrinski's speech); and 439 (Prosecutor Minkovski's speech).

[197] They were wealthy and educated Bulgarians of origin who spoke Greek and were integrated into the Greek culture in the 19th century.

[198] Rabotnichesko Delo #228, 03.10.1946.

The opposition was also indicted for plotting a foreign intervention and, therefore, high treason towards the freedom and independence of Bulgaria. The opposition to the communist regime was incriminated for being a nest of spies and conspirators in other Eastern European countries as well. In Romania, Maniu and several other politicians of the National Peasants' Party were put on trial for conspiring against the government and spying for the USA. In Poland, the Peasant Party of Mikolajczyk was charged with conspiring with British and American diplomats. The Yugoslav communists eliminated the opposition with charges of collaboration with British spies.[199] In Hungary the opposition was accused of betraying the country to the West.[200] In Bulgaria the opposition's treacherous plan allegedly involved acts of sabotage and disorder and an armed struggle or a coup, which would all result in foreign intervention or provoke interference and the penetration of Greek and Turkish troops into Bulgaria.[201]

The most significant opposition figure, Petkov,[202] was considered guilty of national treason[203] towards the freedom and independence of the Bulgarian nation by plotting a foreign intervention in Bulgaria.[204]

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[199] Tomaszewski (1989): 93, 110, and 131 respectively.

[200] Mevius (2005): 171–173.

[201] The trial (1947): 14, 17 and 146 ('confession' of Dimitir Ivanov). Dimitir Ivanov was accused of forming a terrorist group in Shistov under Petkov's instructions in order to create disorder in the country that would result in a foreign intervention, ibid., p. 27 and 40–41 (from the indictment against him).

[202] For contradictions and irregularities in the trial of Petkov see Padev (1948): 70–108 passim. Padev, an anti-communist, was a supporter of Petkov politics and a broadcaster for the BBC.

[203] Dimitrov avowed in the Bulgarian Assembly on 13 January 1948: "The Court fulfilled its role, fulfilled the wish of the people, and sentenced the national traitor to death", in Padev (1948): 65. Headlines in the newspapers 'Rabotnichesko Delo' and 'Otechestven Front' also denounced Petkov as a national traitor: "The whole nation condemns the traitor Petkov", "Most important trial for treason", "Petkov in net of conspiracy and foreign spy rings", "Coward, foreign agent, saboteur—The true face of Nikola Petkov", in Padev (1948): 66.

[204] Prosecutor Petrinski stated that "Petkov and his followers dared conspire against their people and undermine the nation, relying mainly on foreign intervention and assistance", in The trial (1947): 357–358. At this point, I must mention that, even though the hearing was full of the accusation of fomenting a foreign intervention, Petkov was not sentenced on this basis; foreign intervention is nowhere in the factual and juridical qualifications, The trial (1947): 529–593. Nevertheless, Dimitrov justified the sentences against Petkov before international public opinion as follows: "The most indignant circumstance, established in the course of the process, is the fact that N. Petkov's entire conspiratorial and sabotage activity aimed to precipitate foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Bulgaria, and his organisation was denounced as foreign agents, threatening the freedom and independence of our country", in The trial (1947): 621.

Petkov was accused of being an agent of foreign reactionary aggressive forces, which were ever ready to infringe on Bulgaria's national independence.[205] Petkov allegedly wrote a posthumous confession of his crimes 'after his death sentence' and some letters of mercy.[206] In these documents, he implicated the DP of Mushanov, the National Party of Burov, and the BWSDP of Lulchev. He incriminated, also, Exarch Stefan, regent Ganev, G.M. Dimitrov and others. Moreover, he confessed that he had acted under the influence of the political representatives of the imperialist powers, that is, the external enemies of Bulgaria, seeking to undermine Bulgarian and Soviet interests.

As we have seen, the BCP articulated an extensive nationalist discourse with regard to the elimination of the opposition. Mantling the indictments with a national cloak, the communists sought to disguise their efforts to retain power. If national reasons had not been used to legitimise the incrimination of the opposition, it would have been seen as a power game. Opposition to the communist regime jeopardised the image of national unity that the BCP invented in order to pacify and cohere Bulgarian society. Furthermore, criminalisation of the opposition on national grounds served the communist self-image as the vanguard of the nation, which now included the social groups of the working people, the peasants, the intelligentsia, and, for a short term, the patriotic merchants and industrialists. At the same time, the BCP fashioned its self-image as a political force of national salvation which would purge the nation of its parasites, traitors, enemies and apostates. Hence, the continuation of the communist regime seemed to be necessary; without it, the Bulgarian nation would be in danger.

2.7 *The Ethnic 'Other'*

The Bulgarian communist nationalist project could not avoid entanglements with the ethnic 'other'. Apart from contemporary political considerations and exigencies, the mapping out of BCP's minority

[205] The trial (1947): 7. See, also, Prosecutor Minkovski's speech, ibid., p. 440, who declared that "he [Petkov] was preparing to sell our [Bulgarian] national independence".

[206] See the whole text of Petkov's posthumous confession in The trial (1947): 8–9 and details on his mercy letters in Isusov (2000): 308–309. Since all these documents are written in a communist jargon, their originality is severely challenged. Moreover, as Soviet trial methods of bringing the accused to witness for the prosecution were used, the authenticity of the above documents is seriously questionable.

policy was inevitably determined by a set of parameters. First of all, the communists had inherited the considerable discontent of minorities with the Bulgarian state, caused by oppression, economic hardship, ignorance, population exchange, migration and a series of political homogenisation policies. Marxist tradition and the Soviet model of nationalities influenced the BCP at many levels.[207] During Comintern's era, the communist parties assumed to defend the rights of ethnic groups and to manipulate minority grievances. The Leninist principle of the right of nations to self-determination brought the project of 'national and cultural self-determination' into being, while Leninist centralism prescribed subordination of committees of minorities, if applicable, to the BCP and the Fatherland Front.[208] The Stalinist concept of coincidence of territory and language concerning ethnic groups had its impact on the recognition of minority identity, while Soviet concepts of friendly and enemy nations[209] proved applicable in the Bulgarian case. Hence, in the early post-war years, minorities were divided into those affiliated to a friendly nation (e.g. the Macedonians up to 1948) and those affiliated to an enemy nation (e.g. the Turks and Pomaks). Within this scope, as early as the beginning of 1945, Dimitrov advised the communist leadership: "Full rights to national minorities, but concerning the Turks—*circumspectly*".[210] Jews were an ambiguous minority, as the USSR's policy with regard to Israel was ambivalent; yet, after the holocaust, anti-fascism involved consideration for the rights of Jews. As a result, the BCP allowed the establishment of separate Macedonian and Jewish organisations but not of Turkish cultural-educational associations.[211] The right of national and cultural self-determination was granted to Macedonians but not to Turks, who were much larger in number than Macedonians.

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[207] Natan argued that a favourable situation for the cultural development of minorities in general, and Jews in particular, had been fashioned in the Soviet Union, and so should also be cultivated in Bulgaria, BCP Records Fund 324, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 163 (1945): 30.

[208] As early as December 1944, in the first Conference of the Turkish minority, Dragoicheva insisted on forming nationally mixed committees including Bulgarians, Turks, Rom, and Pomaks; in Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 113: 95.

[209] Concepts such as friendly or enemy nations and the Macedonian question are discussed in chapter 3.

[210] Cited in Kalinova and Baeva (2002): 81.

[211] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 66 (1945): 63 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 34 (1945): 7.

The BCP's objective with regard to the ethnic 'other' was to neutralise their political threat. Therefore, provision of minority rights (the use of native language, the founding of schools and cultural organisations, participation in political life) should be seen as a means to eradicate the discontent of minorities with the Bulgarian state caused by the deprivation of the rights to use their native language and worship their religion. In addition, any potential demand from minorities or their prospective champions outside Bulgaria was calculated to be delegitimised.[212] Last but not least, declaring minority rights gave the communist regime a democratic profile. Thereafter the BCP underscored the incongruity between the new era of the so-called 'heaven of minorities'[213] and the old order distinct with Great-Bulgarian chauvinism, discrimination, forcible evangelisation, and politics resulting in tearing Muslims from the Bulgarian people.[214] By presenting itself as the only defender and champion of minority rights, the BCP aimed to win over the minorities in political terms and ensure their devotion to the building of the Fatherland Front Bulgaria.

Provision of minority rights (albeit not all rights to all minorities) was accompanied by strict control of the political and cultural life of minorities (their cadres, institutions, and press) through elites loyal to the communists. The BCP exercised control over minorities either through a central minority administrative body,[215] consisting of staunch supporters of communist policies and intended to embrace all minority membership, or through minority committees[216] incorporated into

[212] Vidinski, for instance, proposed just restoration of Jewish fortunes and state sponsorship of Jewish schools so that the BCP would disarm Zionist opposition, in BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 71 (1945): 7. Dimitrov (1948a): 25 argued that, as "the Macedonian population of the Pirin district has equal rights to all Bulgarian citizens, it is absurdity to speak about any kind of 'liberation' of Macedonians of that district".

[213] Merovan (1946): 9, a Jewish adherent of the Fatherland Front and an assistant professor in the University of Sofia.

[214] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 116: 290–291 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 67 (1945): 7.

[215] E.g. the Central Macedonian Cultural-Educational Committee and the Central Consistory of Jews.

[216] This was the case for Turkish associations, which were placed within local Fatherland Front committees due to the communist apprehension that religious functionaries of Islam could assume the leadership of these associations and promote Turkish nationalistic propaganda. See, for instance, Rangelov's approach to the issue: "We have to think of…the establishment of a plain Turkish organisation…whether we can control it…whether we can inspire the Fatherland Front spirit into our Turkish minority", in BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 66 (1945): 62–63.

the BCP or the Fatherland Front. Thus, minorities could have their own parliamentary groups, but only if they consisted of communists or Fatherland Front followers. Book printing, reading rooms, cultural-educational-mass organisations, and art groups, were all supervised by the Fatherland Front; otherwise, they were dissolved.[217]

If tactics of mild control over minorities were unsuccessful, then those of harsh control were practised. In general, migration or resettlement was sometimes allowed, sometimes encouraged and sometimes forced depending on communist and national interests.[218] The communists applied resettlement to Pomaks who were adverse to the regime or well-disposed towards redrawing the border,[219] while 'Turkish elements reactionary, unreliable, dangerous and unproductive living along the borderline' were forced to migrate.[220] Minority groups or individuals disloyal or antagonistic to the official minority policy of the Bulgarian state would find themselves not only outside the Bulgarian nation but also outside the relevant minority. The United Zionist Organisation (an independent union of eight Zionist groups not controlled by the communists), which promoted emigration before the BCP favoured it, was presented as anti-Jewish having been accused of being a foreign agent of English imperialists and of undermining Bulgarian national interests.[221] Pomaks who addressed Memorandums to the USA and the UK, asking for unification with the Greek state, were seen as not genuine Pomaks but as agents of Greek monarchist-fascists and corrupt national enemies.[222] Turks who insisted on migration to Turkey and complained of oppression were said to be

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[217] For instance, the 'Zionist Weeklies' were liquidated (1948) after charges that they were a mouthpiece for American journalists and the official Jewish communist newspaper 'Jewish News' [Evreisti Vesti] was sanctioned as a Jewish minority newspaper, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 71 (1945): 7, 12 and Haskel (1994): 119, 121.

[218] About 80% of the Jewish population migrated to Israel, while 55,746 Turks migrated to Turkey in 1950 and 98,252 in 1951, in the Concise Bulgarian Encyclopaedia (1963): 342.

[219] Konstantinov (1992): 346–347; the Bulgarian government decided to evacuate a strip of land 1 km wide along the borderline for security reasons, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 8, Archival Unit 186 (1948): 24.

[220] Statements of the Central Committee of the BCP, cited in Stoyanov (1998, p.101); BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 637 (1949): 20; and BCP Records, Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 653 (1948): 4–5.

[221] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 34 (1945): 7; BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 71: 6–7, 12; and Tamir (1979): 221.

[222] Rabotnichesko Delo #59, 18.03.1946.

reactionary circles of Ankara and exponents of American and British imperialism.[223]

The BCP imagined minorities, in essence, as a part of the Bulgarian narod. It declared the unity of the Bulgarian narod and launched a fierce polemic against everything that could cause discord among the Bulgarian people. More especially, Macedonians were recognised in a problematic and contradictory manner, a side-effect of the Yugoslavian-Bulgarian rapprochement, to be imagined, as we shall see, as a particular part of the Bulgarian people. The communist-led Central Jewish Consistory conceived Bulgarian Jewry as an integral part of the Bulgarian narod and took for granted the patriotism and love of Jews for their land of birth and host nation.[224] Consequently, a concept of 'Bulgarian Jews' was developed; that is, Bulgarians in terms of nationality and Jews in terms of religion. Pomaks were considered 'Bulgarian Muslims', who should integrate completely into the Bulgarian narod.[225] It was then thought that cultural growth would lead them to rediscover their own real national identity, which they had lost after their Islamisation centuries before.[226] Turks were deemed 'Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin'. In effect, they had to follow the example of the BCP membership of Turkish origin, who were the backbone of communist propaganda within the Turkish minority, who acknowledged Bulgaria as their fatherland and worked for her progress.[227] On the whole, the Bulgarian government expected minorities to be devoted to Bulgaria as their fatherland, since they were growing up and living within Bulgaria.[228]

Given that minorities were conceived of as belonging to the Bulgarian narod, minority culture and education involved assimilation processes. Indeed, Leninist-style assimilation presupposes the complete equality of peoples, meaning full provision of minority rights. Significantly,

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[223] The Turkish minority (1951): 5, 59–60.

[224] The situation (1946): 7 and BCP Records Fund 324, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 163 (1945): 27–28.

[225] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 114: 17; Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 113 (1944); BCP Records, Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 653 (1948): 4–5; and Vranchev (1948) : 79 whose book was endorsed by the Ministry of Information.

[226] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 67 (1945):1 and 7, Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 113: 91, and Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 116 (1947): 286–288.

[227] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 66 (1945): 165–167 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 34 (1945): 7.

[228] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 66 (1945): passim.

article 79 of the Constitution of 1947 granted minorities the right to be educated in their vernacular and to develop their culture. Nevertheless, to the extent that a culture owned to be 'national in form, socialist in content', a minority could be denationalised or deprived of its identity, as Traverso illustrates by examining the Soviet case of 'Yiddishisation' in the 1920s.[229] Natan, a communist of Jewish origin, urged not only Jews but all minorities alike to connect themselves with the culture of the nation within whose borders they lived and to adopt the highest achievements of its culture.[230] Eventually, the centralist, unified, and Bulgarian socialist culture contradicted the cultures of minorities.

Educational rights, though, implied teaching of the mother-tongue of minorities only; all subjects were taught in Bulgarian and state-driven minority schools had the same curriculum as the Bulgarian schools.[231] At the same time the study of the Bulgarian language was obligatory and of top priority in schools. In this way, it was thought, pupils from the minorities could better obtain a communist education. Minority education relied on communist, patriotic and anti-religious spirit.[232] With regard to the Turkish minority the secular, communist and Bulgarian spirit of education aimed to create a new generation. Having lost the significant elements of its minority culture (religion, history and customs), this generation would be influenced by communist ideas and devoted to the fatherland of the host nation. In the long-term, the use of the Bulgarian language as the common medium of intercourse and cooperation aimed at mono-linguism and Bulgarification.

Apart from long-term homogenisation, which in effect proposed the communist image of national unity, short-term political considerations affected the communist approach to minority issues. The BCP had to persuade minorities to join the 'Fatherland War'; to contribute to the Liberty Loan; to support the new Constitution; to increase productivity; to lend their electorate support to the Fatherland Front;[233] and to detach minorities from the influence of antagonistic foreign and domes-

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[229] Traverso (1997): 172–173.

[230] BCP Records Fund 324, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 163: 21.

[231] For Jewish schools, see BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 71 (1945): 14, and for Turkish BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 66 (1945): 54–55.

[232] Markov (1971): 74.

[233] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 66 (1945): 3–4, 25. See, also, slogans addressed to minorities, in Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 242 (1946): 22, 69, and 91.

tic propaganda.[234] On the whole, it was thought that remedying the minorities' discontent with the Bulgarian state and disarming their nationalistic claims would lead minority populations to relieve the common struggle: the construction of the socialist homeland.

After the events of 9 September and the communist takeover, the BCP's main objective was to hold and cement power. To secure this objective the BCP had to maintain the unity of the Fatherland Front. Besides this, the communists had to: navigate an antagonistic political situation; repel opposition criticism over the stationing of the Red Army; develop a clientele network; apply salami tactics; secure the occupation of key institutions and ministries; introduce nationalisation and collectivisation; deal with serious economic difficulties; and assuage minorities' grievances. To gain consent for their politics, the communists resorted to a nationalist discourse that merged the state, the people, the nation, and the Party. This discourse, which we might call Marxist nationalism, framed strategies and tactics of the BCP highlighting the struggles and sacrifices of the communists for the nation; maintaining that the BCP was the true representative of the Bulgarian nation; politically sanctifying 9 September; vindicating the conduct of the 'Fatherland War'; legitimising economic politics, such as nationalisation and the Freedom Loan; justifying the occupation of key ministries and political apparatuses (army and militia); and underpinning governmental politics.

National arguments were also articulated in order to de-legitimise the opposition and eliminate any political force antagonistic to the communists coming from either the old order and bourgeois parties or from Fatherland Front splits. The communist regime had two categories of political 'other' to tackle: one (the opposition) that caused anomalies to the order and another (Fatherland Front allies) that generated ambiguity. Bulgarian communists opted for condemnation and punishment of the opposition, representing it as dangerous to the nation; and for the creation of a new pattern of reality, that of the 'all-national united Fatherland Front', in which their allies found a new place. This furnished the totalitarian image of national unity, where

[234] For dangers from foreign propaganda, see BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 67 (1945): 2 (about Turks), Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 116 (1947): 297–299 (about Pomaks), and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 71 (1945): 7, 11–12 (about Jews).

diverse social strata were not seen as antagonistic and whose guarantee was the BCP, the vanguard of the nation.

National unity had, in fact, modelled a schema of political polarisation that attributed negative features to the 'other' and presented it as a threat to the whole society. As the Fatherland Front was identified with the Bulgarian nation, every group, which split the Fatherland Front and became independent, was not only outside the nation but also harmful and dangerous to it. The schema 'if you are not within the Fatherland Front, you are against Bulgaria' aimed to isolate and marginalise the 'other'; to incriminate and finally destroy it. Such polarisation was designed to persuade the communists' allies that it was vital to maintain the Fatherland Front as a united organisation able to cope with such an 'evil' menace. As a result, communist parties gradually emerged as the one fixed point capable of acting, as Gomulka put it, as "the hegemon of the nation".[235] They claimed to be the only political force able to achieve national goals and represent national interests. Regarding the ethnic 'other', minority rights in concomitance with migration and assimilation were intertwined with obedience to the communist regime and, most importantly, with consent to the building of the socialist fatherland.

As the communists' nationalist discourse regarding domestic politics has been discussed, their nationalist discourse regarding international politics will now follow. The next chapter discusses how the communists explained their international politics in a national manner and, particularly, Bulgaria's adherence to the socialist bloc. The handling of national questions (Thracian and Macedonian) will also be examined.

[235] Cited in Davies (1977): 47.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATIONALIST DISCOURSE WITH REGARD TO THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

The national discourse of the BCP had not only domestic but also international components and dimensions. The latter are largely downplayed: Cold War literature has tended to overestimate Soviet dictates, whilst overlooking domestic social agents and conditions. Indeed, more generally, the continued development of nationalism during the Cold War era, particularly in the Eastern bloc, has been relatively ignored. Yet, arguably, nationalism did develop within the socialist bloc and had a significant impact on political development across Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria. As we shall see, local communists had some room to manoeuvre, Soviet dictates did not prohibit the development of local nationalist discourses, and, moreover, belonging to the socialist camp was interpreted in national terms.

Although we agree that the degree of independence of Eastern European countries was more restricted than in the West,[1] we shall argue that the local communists still had some relative autonomy to articulate nationalist discourses, provided that these did not conflict with Soviet interests. It could be argued that the expansion of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe was not against the political interests, if not the political survival of the ruling national communists. Cold War interpretations involve regime-type security, as communists in most of the Soviet sphere countries were an insecure minority, with the exception of Yugoslavia. There, the presence of the Red Army was transient and, most importantly, Tito and Yugoslav communists had risen to power and built an army, a party, and an administration on their own.[2] Tito

[1] Gaddis (1997): 289 and Fejto (1974): 8 and 257. Pechatnov and Edmondson (2002): 149 present the American sphere of influence as pluralist and open, while the Soviet one was totalitarian and closed. This happened because the USSR had to maximise her main asset, that is, military power, lacking 'soft' power languages, such as economic power.

[2] Grogin (2000): 137. This was the reason why the Soviet Union, even though her forces were massed on Yugoslav frontiers, finally decided not to invade, ibid., 141.

had absolute dominance in Yugoslavia. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to claim that the security and stability of Eastern European communist regimes was exchanged with the expansion of Soviet security.

Approaches that ascribe a blanket determining role to Soviet directives seem to misunderstand the complexities of local circumstances and shifting international relations; furthermore, such approaches have overstated the aptitudes of Soviet leadership. Some post-Cold-War literature has challenged the perspective that influence can only flow from centres to peripheries; Loth believes that the disclosure of the new primary sources leads to the conclusion that the impression that the Cold War was mostly determined by decision-makers in Moscow and Washington cannot be maintained.[3] The significance of domestic factors rather than superpower directives may be seen in particular in the German case,[4] where, while there was an intention on the part of both the USA and the USSR (for different reasons) to prevent Germany's partition,[5] the domestic strategies of political forces to secure their power, headed by Adenauer[6] and Ulbricht, reinforced and underpinned Germany's division. In the case of East Germany, as Loth suggests:

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[3] Loth (2000): 255.

[4] But not only. Grogin (2000): 132, relying on the transcripts of Beneš discussions with Stalin, argues that it was Beneš, a non-communist in Czechoslovakia, who "took the initiative and offered his country as an instrument of Russian expansion in Central Europe".

[5] Loth (2000): 243–244, relying on the new primary sources, argues that American policymakers did not think that permanent military commitment in Europe due to Germany's division could be justified domestically and financially. The Soviets feared that a Western German state would soon be allowed to re-arm itself and pose a danger to Soviet interests. Both would prefer a neutralised Germany excluded from the East-West conflict, as there were several attempts by both the Americans and the Soviets to restore German unity after the Berlin Blockade. Ulam (1999): 113–114 argues that Stalin was not confident that the division into two Germanys would become permanent, provided that he insisted on compensating Poland with German areas, which would have remained within the future East German state.

[6] As early as the summer of 1945, Adenauer concluded that the Soviet occupied part was lost to Germany for an incalculable period of time, in Loth (2000): 245. And, as late as June 1953, he confessed that he had a nightmare named Potsdam, ibid., 249. See, also, Weitz (1997): 344.

> Ulbricht appears to have been a revolutionary in his own right—in developing his own course he is comparable to Tito, Gomulka,[7] or Mao, and in his technique of influencing Stalin to Kim Il-Sung,[8]

although his regime depended on the Soviet military presence. Moscow did not intend the changes to take this form, but national communist forces advanced in the shadow of the Red Army. "They were sanctioned by the Cold War, which they themselves had helped to provoke".[9]

Apart from the significance of domestic factors, there was no overall blueprint for Soviet expansion in the aftermath of the war, as many authors have argued;[10] this allowed for diversifying national paths to communism in the early post-war years.[11] Besides, Stalin's foreign policy was incoherent; by and large, it only jelled in 1947 because of his fear of the offensive potential of American economic intrusion expressed in the Marshall Plan.[12] The foundation of the Cominform and the Sovietisation of all economic, political, cultural, and institutional Eastern European life indicate the strong Soviet control and dominance over Eastern Europe. Does it mean, however, the suppression of nationalism and prohibition of articulating national discourses? Both the Cominform and Sovietisation give evidence to the contrary.

The founding declaration of the Cominform itself articulated a nationalist discourse:

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[7] Iazhborovskaia (1997): 123–138 argues that Gomulka followed a very distinct path to socialism, with some important differences to Stalinist policies (egalitarian and mutual relations with the Soviet Union, gradual industrialisation and collectivisation, close ties between high ranking Party cadres and people, opposition to the establishment of the Cominform).

[8] Loth (2000): 252. In the same vein, Gaddis (2000): 32 argues that "by the time Khrushchev came to power, such satellite leaders as Ulbricht and Gomulka were often in a position to determine the pace if not always the outcome of events".

[9] Loth (2000): 253.

[10] Volkov (1997): 56, relying on telegrams on Soviet policy in the Balkans, argues that the Soviet Union did not plan the Sovietisation of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria as early as 1944.

[11] Significantly, Abrams (2004): 36 describes this period as follows: "each country of the region followed its own, unique path to communist dictatorship, influenced by its historical development before the war, the way in which the war played itself out, the domestic political and ideological constellation obtaining at war's end, and the behaviour of the superpowers".

[12] Lundestad (2000): 73–74, Grogin (2000) 128, and Parrish (1997): 268–287. Swain and Swain (1998): 28–29 argue that Stalin had no interest in seizing Eastern Europe into his orbit. The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the exclusion of the communists from the post-war coalition governments in France and Italy changed his mind.

> …communist parties should brandish the flag of defence of national independence and sovereignty of their countries… In their struggle against attempts at the economic and political enslavement of their countries, if they contrive to head all the forces ready to uphold their national dignity and independence, no plan for enslaving European or Asiatic countries will be successful.[13]

The task of communist parties was to rally round them and unite all the democratic and patriotic forces. On its own side, Sovietisation of culture did not imply renunciation of nationalism. Rather, what was extended from the Soviet Union to satellites was an ideology that also focussed on the expulsion of foreign influences; the construction of a Russian self-image of superior national qualities; the rethinking of history on nationalist lines; the 'little nationalism' of Soviet Union Republics; and a campaign against 'anti-patriotism', 'national nihilism', 'rootless cosmopolitanism' and 'servile adulation of things foreign'.[14] Moreover, while the communists had had one socialist motherland to give their devotion to, after the end of the war the socialist camp was split into many fatherlands with particular national interests and demands.

Indeed, there were national interests inside the socialist bloc: the Bulgarian-Yugoslav dispute on Macedonia; the Polish-Czechoslovak dispute on the question of the so-called 'Zaolzie'; the Transylvanian question; the question of Polish borderlines; the question of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia; and the exchange of populations between People's Republics. Each nation-state sought to satisfy them as far as the international situation and its commitment to the socialist bloc allowed. In parallel, each country tried to create a guarantee of assistance in the event of aggression; hence, a network of alliances was forged inside either bloc, where each country could find its national allies. Within this context then, communist parties could develop national discourses and take initiatives within the limits set by the socialist bloc.

While the case before the Second World War was that nation-states formed alliances and sometimes almost subordinated their foreign policy to the interests of Great Powers or international coalitions, post-war settlements divided the world into two blocs. This transformed international relations and particularly affected less powerful nation-states, which now operated strictly inside blocs. Much of the

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[13] Rabotnichesko Delo #232, 05.10.1947 (the founding declaration of the Cominform).
[14] Kagarlitsky (1988): 128–133; Slezkine (1996); and Snyder (2003): 304–312.

literature has discussed nationalism before the Second World War and after 1989 in-depth.[15] There is relatively little literature on the nationalism of the Cold War era. What had happened to nationalism then? Had it disappeared? Examining the case of Bulgaria, it is argued here that during the Cold War nationalism did develop but inside the two blocs. A nationalist discourse emerged in which belonging to one group or the other was of major significance. Belonging to a camp, which might be seen as relative transfer of sovereignty, was intended to be reconciled with nationalism. As Soviet Republics were allowed to articulate their 'little nationalism', satellites of the socialist bloc were allowed to articulate their own. Within this context, nation-states had to decide where they belonged, who was with them, and who were their friends and enemies.

Belonging to a camp and the world-wide dichotomy entailed revision and/or reinterpretation of the national character. As Abrams has already shown,[16] the Czech communist strivings for the soul of the nation parlayed the values of the East and reoriented "the national cultural self-understanding toward a Slavic East with the USSR at its head". This enterprise of formulating a socialist Slavic Czech identity proved remarkably successful in gaining adherents in the democratic socialist intelligentsia as well as in Czech society. Despite Pan-Slavism being considered a pretext for Russian domination in Poland, the PPR endeavoured to reshape the Polish national identity introducing strong Slavic elements.[17] The adaptation of Soviet conditions to national needs after taking into account national traditions, as the model of the People's Republic prompted, credited the communists with patriotism. Within this general framework, the BCP could argue that Bulgaria's commitment to the socialist bloc and the Soviet Union was a solution perfectly compatible with the national interests and national identity of the Bulgarian people; thus, it downplayed the fact that its own power relied to a great degree on the Soviet Union and the Red Army as well as the unity within the socialist bloc. As Chervenkov expressed it, "all honest and real Bulgarian patriots cannot imagine…a bright future of [our] people outside the democratic bloc, without eternal

[15] The case of Hobsbawm (1993) is very striking. It seems that the course of nationalism stops at the end of the Second World War, whilst nationalism re-emerged after 1989, as if it was, for some reason, frozen.

[16] Abrams (2004): 157–176 passim.

[17] For more details, see Behrends (2009): 448–450.

association with the Soviet Union".[18] The Bulgarian communist leaders also argued that Bulgaria belonged to the Eastern bloc on the grounds of tribal and language affinity, historical traditions and cultural mutual relations.[19] The idea of Bulgarian-Soviet affinity was also described as a "law-governed result of eternal, or rather of a thousand-year old, intercourse between the Bulgarian and Russian people."[20] The opposition's interpretation of Bulgaria's incorporation into the socialist bloc, i.e. that the BCP relied on external forces, namely, the Red Army, for its power, could then be discredited and seen as opposed to the real national interests. Apparently, this compromise of Soviet interests with the national identity as well as national interests in each communist regime of Eastern Europe made nationalism compatible with belonging to a camp and with strict compliance with dictates.

This chapter will indicate that nationalism on this level generated a further set of binary divisions (originating both in the national and communist worldview) and a clear-cut distinction between friends and enemies, in which certain qualities were attributed to one set of nations and the converse to the other set. If a nation is conceived as part of a certain bloc (insider), it is conceived of as sharing qualities with the fellow-nations of that bloc. If a nation is conceived outside that bloc (outsider), it is conceived of as being deprived of the qualities of the respective bloc. Insiders were friends, whereas outsiders were enemies; belonging to a bloc meant the rearticulation of national identities at home. Key elements in the articulation of such discourse were the anti-imperialist idea, the concept of 'socialist patriotism', the idea of eternal association with the Soviet Union, the idea of a new Pan-Slav movement, and strong competition with nation-enemies. On another level, specific questions of foreign policy were also addressed within this framework, drawing on and reinforcing the division of the world into friends and enemies of the nation and explaining the reasons of national belonging to a world-wide camp.

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[18] Rabotnichesko Delo #233, 07.10.1947.
[19] Kolarov (1977): 65.
[20] Rabotnichesko Delo #269, 19.11.1946.

3.1 *Binary Divisions*

The division of the world into two parts could be conveniently explained both in communist and nationalist terms. The communist worldview dichotomised the moral universe, dividing the world into Good and Bad, communism and capitalism, Party members and dissidents. Within the context of the Cold War, binary oppositions of peace versus imperialism, friends versus enemies, and the camp of Good versus the camp of Evil, came into force. A nationalist worldview segments the world, dividing 'insiders' from 'outsiders', according to how a national community imagines the preconditions of including the fellow and excluding the other. Extending these notions to the situation of the Cold War, it could be argued that world division between the Western capitalist bloc and the Eastern socialist bloc shaped 'in-group' and 'out-group' identities. In the context of the Cold War, it could be argued that the 'in-group' identified itself with the qualities of the camp to which it belonged by reference to the qualities of the opposite camp. Drawing on Zhdanov's world division into an 'imperialist, anti-democratic' camp and an 'anti-imperialist, democratic' one and given that Bulgaria belonged to the latter, she was supposed to constitute a progressive, freedom-loving, peaceful, democratic, patriotic and anti-imperialist nation in contrast to an 'out-group' of reactionary, fascist, warmonger, imperialist, and nationalistic nations. Belonging to the socialist bloc forged her national identity.

The new national worldview divided the universe into two categories of nation: 'friendly nations' and 'enemy nations'. Drawing on Mouffe (1993), this distinction can be explained by the complex interaction between equivalence and difference. The logic of equivalence functions by creating paratactical equivalential identities (progressive, freedom-loving, peaceful, democratic, and patriotic) and insisting on a political frontier between two opposed camps (socialist and imperialist). The logic of equivalence assisted the conceptualisation of the common socialist camp distinctly opposed to the imperialist camp. On another level, as it attempts to weaken and displace antagonisms, the logic of difference facilitated the integration of different subjects (non-Slav and Slav nations, socialist countries and anti-imperialist movements) into the socialist bloc.

The concepts of 'friendly nations' and 'enemy nations' also have their parallels in the more recent and more immediately influential

Soviet past. It could be argued that the former originated in the metaphor of the Friendship of Peoples, introduced by Stalin in 1935. Martin shows that the metaphor of the Friendship of Peoples gave the Russians a primary role as the motivating force that forged and sustained the friendship among Soviet nations, while it stemmed from the notion of the Brotherhood of the Peoples, which presented Moscow as the centre of the proletarian revolution, not as the capital of Russia.[21] In the post-war years, the Soviet Union assumed the key role of promulgating friendship among socialist nations. As had occurred earlier within the borders of the USSR, weekly cultural and art festivals were held to celebrate other socialist countries in order to promote the friendship of socialist nations. The same tendency extended outside the USSR and inside the socialist bloc: membership of the bloc flagged nationhood in many ways, while recognising the primary position and role of the USSR.

As Martin[22] indicates, in the Great Terror era, all the diaspora nationalities of the Soviet Union were characterised as enemy nations. He quotes from internal documents of the Soviet political police directed against 'nationalities of foreign governments' and the Politburo decree of 1938 referring to the:

> …operation for the destruction of espionage and sabotage contingents made up of Poles, Latvians, Germans, Estonians, Finns, Greeks, Iranians, Kharbintsy (ethnic Russians), Chinese, and Romanians, both foreign subjects and Soviet citizens.

These politics relied on Soviet fears of recruited border-crossing spies and saboteurs and contributed to the paranoia of the Soviet Union. Similar fears were developed in the Bulgarian communist state, which was deeply concerned that minorities remained loyal to the Fatherland Front government.[23] Enemy nations of Bulgaria were, first and foremost, the USA and members of the opposite capitalist bloc, such as neighbouring Greece and Turkey.

Because of the polarisation of international relations, the majority of political groups of a given national territory turned towards the

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[21] Martin (2001): 432–437.

[22] Martin (2001): 328–341 passim.

[23] For dangers coming from foreign propaganda, see BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 67: 2 (about Turks), Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 116: 297–299 (about Pomaks), and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 71: 7, 11–12 (about Jews).

particular international bloc which could support their political aspirations and views, and attributed to the bloc of their preference the role of defender of people's freedom and sovereignty. Camp preference for a particular political or social agent could be projected in a collectivistic manner as national or patriotic.[24] Belonging to the capitalist or the socialist bloc was then identified with the national aspirations of a country and arguments of a nationalist kind were developed in order to justify alignment with one of the blocs. In this respect, any adoption of dictates or observance of instructions given by the socialist bloc could be presented as of national interest and due to the patriotic inclinations of the local communists.

Polarisation promoted the idea that 'if you are not with us, you are against us'. As Chervenkov stated:

> …there is no middle before this clear outline of the fronts in the contemporary international situation: the front of imperialism and war versus the front of peace and democracy.[25]

If a nation is not integrated into the category of 'our bloc', it is against 'us'. On a smaller scale, a similar conviction came into force regarding individuals within a nation, namely that belonging to a camp determined one's enemies. If an individual, or a political group, stepped outside the category of 'our bloc', they were not only against 'our bloc' but also against 'our nation'. A neutral position or a third category could not be tolerated. On an international scale, socialists, such as Blum and Attlee, were said to conduct treacherous policy as tools of the imperialist enemy.[26] In the Bulgarian case, the opposition of Petkov and Lulchev as well as the Trotskyists and Anarchist-Communists, who did not encourage Soviet affiliation and Slav unity, were portrayed as being outside the Bulgarian nation.[27] Within this context, for instance, Dimitrov insisted that "whoever is against Bulgarian-

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[24] Pastuhov grounded the subordination of Bulgaria to the capitalist bloc as follows: "Let's listen to the voice of America and her president, Truman, with more respect and trust. This voice is friendly, affectionate, gratuitous, and exclusively to our [Bulgarian] benefit", cited in Isusov (2000): 134.

[25] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 33 (October 1947): 115–116. See, also, another excerpt of his report: "In the struggle against imperialists, in the struggle for peace and democracy, there is no place for any sort of neutrality", ibid., 119.

[26] Rabotnichesko Delo #232, 05.10.1947 (the founding declaration of the Cominform).

[27] BCP Records Fund 191, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 62: 4 and Rabotnichesko Delo #7, 11.01.1947.

Soviet association is against Bulgaria. He is not a patriot".[28] In this manner, both foreign policy and domestic exclusion of the political and ethnic 'other' may well be framed on national grounds.

3.2 *The Nation and its Friends at the International Level*

By integrating herself into the socialist anti-imperialist bloc, Bulgaria defined herself as progressive, since she followed a socialist path, in contrast to the reactionary 'other' of the capitalist imperialist bloc. The second link of the equivalential chain of socialist nations concerns the freedom-loving self. In the Cold War context, only the allies of the Eastern Socialist camp were called freedom-loving nations, a name that had been given to the Allies during the Second World War. The USSR was recognised as the leader of the freedom-loving nations. Third, Bulgaria was identified with the so-called 'bloc of peace', which would constitute a barrier to the plans of imperialist warmongers. Hence, Bulgaria was defined as peaceful in contrast to the warmonger 'other'. The fourth binary division was fashioned between democracy and imperialism, which were said to be incompatible. Finally, nationalism was divided into good and bad versions. Patriotic nations of the socialist bloc, defenders of their territory, declared absolute respect for frontiers and announced that they would fight for peace and national independence against any invader, while they would never make an attack upon foreign territory. Thus, the socialist anti-imperialist bloc was considered as consisting of progressive, freedom-loving, peaceful, democratic, and patriotic nations. It was inside this camp that Bulgaria found her friends. Old ideas and concepts now reinvigorated, such as the anti-imperialist idea and association with the Soviet Union, as well as newly invented ones, such as 'socialist patriotism' and Pan-Slavism, framed the communist camp preference on national grounds.

3.2.a *Socialist Patriotism and Proletarian Internationalism*

The BCP claimed that it had given ample proof of its staunch patriotism in resisting the foreign occupier during the Second World War. This patriotism had, however, distinctly international and socialist dimensions. Fighting against Nazism, it had participated in the inter-

[28] Cited in Lefterov (1954): 32.

national struggle of the working people to defeat fascism. Patriotism and internationalism were linked together in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union: the Soviet Army fought both for the defence of the Soviet land and the liberation of other countries from the fascist yoke. Thus, in the Second World War, patriotism and internationalism had become reconciled within a particular theoretical framework. In the post-war years, socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism took a new shape: national unity at home and international alliance with the peaceful socialist countries against the imperialist powers respectively.

Socialist patriotism seems to be coterminous with the concept of the 'socialist nation', presented in Stalin's 1929 article "The Nationalities Question and Leninism". At that time, Stalin suggested that only bourgeois nations would disappear with the end of capitalism, or rather not disappear but be transformed into socialist nations.[29] Even though he still believed in the disappearance of nations in the distant future after the world-wide triumph of socialism, Stalin came close to asserting the permanence of socialist nations. This sort of nationalism, that is, defence of the socialist fatherland, was declared as a genuine patriotism, quite different to bourgeois nationalism, defined as the enemy of communism.[30] Revai, a Hungarian communist, echoes this dualistic approach to nationalism contrasting 'true love of the fatherland' and modest national self-consciousness with the megalomania, chauvinism, and national arrogance of the Horthy period.[31] Equivalent to Hungarian *szocialista hazafiság* are German *sozialistischer patriotismus*, Romanian *patriotismului revolutionar socialist*, and Polish *patriotyzmu socjalistznego*,[32] all local versions of socialist patriotism. This version of nationalism, 'socialist patriotism', allowed for national peculiarities. Bulgaria could learn from the Soviet experience; however, she could adjust the Soviet experience to her own national road to socialism.[33] Equivalent to this conception are the 'Czechoslovak road to socialism' (as neither a bourgeois democracy nor the dictatorship of the proletariat, were in vogue during the first post-war years) and the 'German road to socialism' implying the 'political and national

[29] Cited in Martin (2001): 447–448.
[30] Dimitrov (1949): 55.
[31] Mevius (2005): 99.
[32] Mevius (2009): 390.
[33] Rabotnichesko Delo #269, 19.11.1946.

peculiarities, the special economic and cultural traits' of the German people.[34]

In Dimitrov's discourse this sort of nationalism was given a particular inflection. Bulgarians:

> …must keep their fatherland as the apple of their eye. This is our fatherland, not the fatherland of reactionaries, speculators, and appropriators. This is the fatherland of workers, peasants, free intelligentsia, honest and good industrialists and merchants, of the entire Bulgarian people.[35]

Dimitrov's nationalism echoes that of Stalin:

> In the past we did not have and could not have a fatherland, but now, after capitalism's collapse and the working class seizure of power, we do have a fatherland and we defend its independence.[36]

In complete contrast to the Marxian dictum that 'the proletarians have no country', it seemed that the proletarians had now acquired many different countries.

Internationalism had traditionally been identified with the defence of the Soviet Union; Stalin had pointed out in 1927 that "an internationalist is one who is ready to defend the USSR without reservation, without wavering, unconditionally". 'Proletarian internationalism', as now defined by Dimitrov, took a slightly different tone; it implied "a firm unified front of the new democracies and the USSR in the struggle against the aggressive forces of international reaction and imperialism".[37] As the Soviet Union was the key element of proletarian internationalism, every internationalist should defend the USSR, because by defending the universal basis of the revolutionary working movement internationalists were defending their own countries. Maintaining the integrity of the USSR would ensure the integrity of the anti-imperialist front, the defender of national independence and state sovereignty of each socialist country.

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[34] See Abrams (2004): 185 and Kiepe (2009): 469 respectively.

[35] Rabotnichesko Delo #381, 11.12.1945. In the same vein, the leader of the MKP, Rákosi, announced that "we, the representatives of the working people, especially now when we have become lords in our own country, when the Fatherland is the Fatherland of the working people… we must nurture progressive patriotism", cited in Mevius (2005): 249.

[36] From "Questions of Leninism" (1940), cited in Kalinin (1944): 5.

[37] Dimitrov (1949): 55.

A series of books, mainly translated from Russian,[38] appeared in the early post-war years, in which it was argued that Soviet patriotism, as defined by Lenin and Stalin, coordinates love of fatherland, nation, mother-tongue, national traditions and culture, on the one hand, and the vital interests of all working people, on the other. Soviet patriotism is not only love of the fatherland, but also of the socialist fatherland, which implies an independent and blossoming fatherland. Within this context, internationalism predicates socialist patriotism. According to Obretenov,[39] Lenin[40] and Stalin had synthesised patriotism and internationalism, so that patriotism and the international solidarity of proletarians had now become indivisible. As Zhdanov stated:

> Stalin made it clear that between internationalism properly understood and proletarian patriotism there can be no contradictions. Rootless cosmopolitanism that denies national feelings and the notion of a homeland has nothing in common with proletarian internationalism.[41]

Zhdanov, also, underlined that "internationalism comes into existence where national art blossoms out. If we ignore this truth…we will become cosmopolitans without a fatherland".[42] And a Czech communist, Tvorba, claimed that patriotism and internationalism are identical: "a person who loves and cares about his nation…an uncompromising warrior against capitalism is a builder of socialism, is an internationalist, is a patriot".[43] Thus, the ideological gap between nationalism and internationalism could be bridged through Soviet patriotism and, also, 'proletarian internationalism'. The convergence of proletarian internationalism and socialist patriotism justified the hegemonic role of the Soviet Union in the Eastern bloc and Bulgaria's participation in it. Defending the USSR and the socialist bloc had also become a national task. Last but not least, the communists calculated to ensure social

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[38] For example, see 'Soviet patriotism' (1948) and Sobolev (1949).

[39] Obretenov (1950): 10.

[40] Pavlov refers to an excerpt from Lenin in order to legitimise patriotism: "Patriotism is one of the deepest emotions, established during centuries and millennia in separate fatherlands", in Pavlov (1939): 12–13.

[41] Banac (2003): 163, dated in 1941.

[42] Rabotnichesko Delo #114, 16.05.1948. Zhdanov saw cosmopolitanism as an imperialist worldview.

[43] Abrams (2004): 95. The same course of socialist patriotism occurred in Hungary, where, as Mevius (2005): 250 has pointed out, Hungarian patriotism was equated with proletarian internationalism, loyalty to the Soviet Union, worship of Stalin, and hatred of the imperialist West.

coherence against the spectrum of a warmonger and imperialist 'outgroup' threatening the fatherland.

3.2.b *The Anti-imperialist Idea and the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau)*

As shown, the anti-imperialist idea had first been formulated in the inter-war period. Up to 9 September, the BCP had promoted the anti-imperialist idea to call for the masses to struggle against imperialism and to criticise the 'anti-national conduct' of the ruling classes which had submitted Bulgaria to the imperialist powers. Insofar as the September 9 uprising guaranteed the independent political and economic development of Bulgaria, the Fatherland Front's main objective was to ensure national independence, state sovereignty and territorial integrity for Bulgaria. No foreign power would interfere in the domestic affairs of Bulgaria, who would now stand on an equal footing with any nation. In the post-war period, it was then argued, the anti-imperialist struggle became a struggle for maintaining national independence and sovereignty. In this struggle, the communist parties and the socialist countries had to deal with the threat of a new form of imperialism that had emerged in the post-war period.

Reinvigorated anti-imperialism now implied that members of the socialist bloc would not attack each other. Furthermore, membership of the Eastern, so-called anti-imperialist bloc involved a common front designed to shield socialist countries from the imperialist tendency of expansionism. Peoples within the capitalist bloc would use anti-imperialism to oppose the exploitation, plundering, and enslavement pursued by great imperialist powers. A new type of international resistance movement against imperialism, and American imperialism in particular, was thus formed; it included the Soviet Union first and foremost, People's Republics, the working-class movement and the democratic movement of every single country, and the national-liberation movement of colonies.[44] Against the threats of the imperialist bloc, and the USA in particular, socialist countries had come together to establish a common front: the Cominform.

Within the framework of the Cominform, Bulgaria signed 'agreements of friendship, solidarity and mutual assistance' with the Soviet

[44] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 33 (October 1947): 115 and Rabotnichesko Delo #28, 05.02.1947.

Union and the member countries of the socialist bloc. Such agreements were designed to ensure the unity of the socialist bloc; to collectively shield signatory countries against the aggression of imperialist states and their allies; and to support every initiative for ensuring world peace. They created a network of friendly and fellow countries pledged to resist imperialism, in general, and to mobilise their subjects in the case of war, in particular.[45] The agreements involved clauses on mutual assistance in economic and cultural matters, and due measures for the defence of state security, national independence, and territorial integrity.

The anti-imperialist stance of communist parties and socialist countries made patriotic devotion to the nation perfectly compatible with devotion to a foreign country, namely the Soviet Union. Socialist nations would defend their own independence but, at the same time, they would defend the national independence of their comradeship and the USSR, the legitimising leading force of the anti-imperialist bloc and the fatherland of world socialism. Within this context, defence of the anti-imperialist bloc was identified with defence of national independence and state sovereignty, and vice versa. More especially, the Bulgarian communist regime interpreted the integration of Bulgaria into the Cominform and presented agreements with other members of the socialist bloc as a common attempt to secure Bulgaria's freedom, independence, sovereignty, and bright future.[46] In this way, the communist foreign policy and, in particular, devotion to the USSR were projected as serving the national interests of Bulgaria.

3.2.c *The Soviet Union*

The international role of the Soviet Union rendered her the focus of international proletarian devotion. She represented the motherland of all workers and she was also the country where the first successful socialist revolution had occurred. The significance of the international role of the Soviet Union was enhanced by her defeat of Germany: her image as the saviour of Europe and civilisation from fascist barbarity was shaped. In the post-war years, the Soviet Union was presented as the bond of cohesion within the 'anti-imperialist coalition' and as the

[45] See, for instance, the Agreement of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance signed by Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, in Rabotnichesko Delo #279, 29.11.1947, and Bulgaria and Albania, in Rabotnichesko Delo #296, 18.12.1947 respectively.

[46] Rabotnichesko Delo #143, 25.06.1947.

champion of the independence and sovereignty of the socialist bloc membership and the Slavs in particular against US imperialism. These roles legitimised the claims of national leaderships to approach the USSR as a powerful democratic and progressive ally of their nation.

Within this framework, affinity between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union was considered the cornerstone of national policy in Bulgaria.[47] Dimitrov insisted that:

> …there is no sober-minded Bulgarian patriot who is not convinced that a real friendship with the Soviet Union is no less necessary for the national independence and prosperity of Bulgaria than sun and air for a live organism.[48]

For this reason, all Bulgarian patriots had to support a "continuous and eternal alliance with the Soviet Union, our [Bulgaria's] selfless defender and patron".[49]

Bulgaria looked to the Soviet Union for assistance on a range of key issues including, for instance, the conclusion of a peace treaty and financial matters.[50] The communist regime expressed its gratitude to the USSR for supporting the Bulgarian cause at the Paris Conference. Because of the alliance with the Soviet Union, it was argued, the Bulgarian borders were secured against aggressive Greek aspirations backed by powerful allies, and Bulgaria improved her international situation. Significantly, the BCP stressed that the USSR contributed to the restoration of Dobrudzha to Bulgaria,[51] which was an old, historical, national Bulgarian claim. The BCP also hoped that the protection of the Soviet Union, and the support of Slav and democratic nations would restore Western Thrace to Bulgaria.[52] The Soviet Army would prevent Bulgaria from being plundered by hostile imperialist powers.[53] In return for her assistance, the Soviet Union expected Bulgaria to mould a free and independent nation, so that she would never again

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[47] Kolarov (1977): 65.

[48] Rabotnichesko Delo #269, 19.11.1946.

[49] Rabotnichesko Delo #275, 26.11.1946. Dimitrov's letter to the Congress of the Bulgarian-Soviet Society.

[50] Lazarov (1945): 9, 13.

[51] Kolarov (1977): 66–67.

[52] Rabotnichesko Delo #287, 10.12.1946. Indeed, Slav delegates and above all the Polish and the Ukrainian vigorously supported the Bulgarian claims on Western Thrace at the Peace Conference, in King (1973): 50.

[53] Rabotnichesko Delo #77, 02.04.1948.

turn against the Soviet Union in support of the imperialistic pretensions of capitalist powers, as she had done in the past.

Any kind of interference by the Soviet Union in the domestic affairs of Bulgaria was presented as based on the criterion of national interest. First of all, as it seemed to be a general trend in Eastern Europe, the advance of the Red Army within Bulgarian territory was not interpreted as an invasion but as a liberation campaign.[54] The Red Army, it was claimed, had come into Bulgaria to liberate the Bulgarian nation from the German yoke and fascism rather than to liberate the (Bulgarian) toiling masses from capitalist bonds. Afterwards, the stationing of the Red Army in Bulgaria was to preserve her national sovereignty and defend her from any international intervention. The Red Army also warded off civil war. The participation of Soviet specialists in the administration of the Ministry of the Interior had helped improve its services.[55] Soviet financial assistance would, it was argued, reconstruct and invigorate Bulgaria's national economy so as she would never again be a colony of capitalist and imperialist powers. Hence, the BCP provided a set of nationalist reasons to explain and legitimise the presence of the Red Army and Soviet interference in Bulgarian domestic affairs.

Bulgaria expressed her gratitude towards the Soviet Union for the central role she had played, and continued to play, in Bulgaria's national survival, by erecting a central, impressive monument dedicated to the Red Army (the 'Monument to the Red Army'). In the past, the Soviet Union had liberated Bulgaria and saved universal culture and civilisation from the Teutonic hordes. In the present, the Soviet Union was recognised as the fighter for peace and defender of small nations, such as Bulgaria, against imperialist aspirations and warmongers. For all these reasons, as the communist mouthpiece Rabotnichesko Delo stressed, "no Bulgarian heart could exist that does not join initiatives for the immortalisation of the Bulgarian people's recognition towards the Soviet Army",[56] and the Soviet Union in general.

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[54] See, for instance, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 7, Archival Unit 3 (September 1944): 1, The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 1): 98 and The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 2): 339–340. On Hungary, see Mevius (2005): 104.

[55] Isusov (2000): 298.

[56] Rabotnichesko Delo #230, 03.10.1947.

Bulgaria's national devotion was not confined to the Soviet Union, but extended to the Red Army and also to Stalin as an individual. On the occasion of Stalin's 66th birthday, the Rabotnichesko Delo expressed the gratitude of the Bulgarian people to all three, since they owed to them their freedom, their people's sovereignty, their independence, and their national survival. For this reason, every true and conscious Bulgarian was supposed to send their good wishes to Stalin, the so-called 'best friend of Bulgaria'.[57] The stationing of the Red Army, the presence of Soviet experts, financial and administrative Soviet assistance, and the hegemonic role of the USSR and Stalin personally all had to be discursively articulated in terms of differential, positive positions: Slav brother and liberator. Any compliance of Bulgaria with the Cominform and the USSR was then legitimised on national grounds. In this context, an old but recently modified kinship discourse was developed.

3.2.d *Pan-Slavism*

Not only was Soviet-Bulgarian affiliation interpreted in national terms but the integration of Bulgaria into the socialist camp was also construed within a national, kinship framework. On this level, the BCP turned to a version of Pan-Slavism; it developed a nationalist, kinship discourse in part by integrating what might be called racialised elements. In this sense, in the Pan-Slav discourse of the BCP, race and nation become closely articulated, each conferring legitimacy on the other. As Gilroy argues,[58] racialised elements could bridge opposing nationalisms (e.g. those of Bulgaria and Serbia). Racial discourses are also important in constructing 'in-groups', that is in this case, camps or blocs. These can be considered as locations where particular versions of solidarity, belonging, kinship, and identity that transcend the nation have been devised and practiced.

To begin with, Pan-Slavism provided an image of what might be called 'multi-speed nations': Slav nations had reached a more advanced (socialist) mode of production than that existing in non-Slav (capitalist) countries. This schema reflects the Stalinist doctrine of 'socialism in one country' and the consequential uneven advance towards socialism. As socialism is identified with the Slav world within this theo-

[57] Rabotnichesko Delo #390, 21.12.1945.
[58] Gilroy (2000): 82–85.

retical framework, some nations are presented as guides to others, that is, superior to them. Thus, internationalism and solidarity were essentially to be developed between unequal subjects and to be exerted mainly for the defence of the socialist bloc and, in particular, for the motherland of socialism, the Soviet Union.

Secondly, Pan-Slavism helped to explain the advance of socialism on what were almost racial-national grounds. The Slav character was considered an asset with regard to socialist achievements. In this context, for instance, the victory of the Soviet Union over fascism was perceived by Czech intellectuals as the victory of all Slavs.[59] Chervenkov argued that the Slavs overthrew the fascist regimes of their countries and undertook democratic transformations. An alliance of workers, peasants, and intellectuals as well as the eradication of unemployment took place in Slav countries.[60] Here, a social development is effectively attributed to a racial-national cause. Slav countries were identified with socialism. This argument was particularly useful for the discourse of the BCP, because it helped to explain the international position of the Bulgarian nation. Since Bulgaria was a member of the Slav family, it had also to be simultaneously a communist one.

This new-style Pan-Slavism pioneered by Stalin and the Soviet Union was distinct from the old Tsarist Pan-Slavism, since, as Stalin had declared, the Soviet Union would foster a Slav union consisting of equal, mutually respected members.[61] In this context, however, the Soviet Union enjoyed a central and key position within the family of Slav nations: first among equals. Significantly, at the Slav Convention (held in Sofia on the national holiday of 3rd March 1945) it was declared that the Soviet Union was the flag of Slav nations and Stalin was the best friend of the Slavs.[62] Bulgarian communist politicians and intellectuals, of course, recognised the hegemonic role of the Soviet Union within the socialist bloc; yet they constantly highlighted the contribution of Bulgaria to Slav culture. They claimed that Bulgaria was the classical focus of Slav literature, the cradle of Pan-Slav education, and the apostle of Slav unity.[63] In many ways, Bulgaria was presented in this discourse as a privileged member of the united Slav

[59] Abrams (2004): 159.
[60] Rabotnichesko Delo #284, 06.12.1946.
[61] Rabotnichesko Delo #135, 24.02.1945 and Rabotnichesko Delo #284, 06.12.1946.
[62] Rabotnichesko Delo #142, 05.03.1945.
[63] Rabotnichesko Delo #142, 05.03.1947.

world. Elevation of national pride might have mollified resentment about Bulgaria's obedience and loyalty to Soviet directives.

The BCP bound Bulgaria's destiny together with that of the USSR and the other Slav nations,[64] as communists of other Eastern European countries had bound even the existence of their nation-state with the Soviet Union and the future of their nation with the Slavic East.[65] As Chervenkov announced at the Pan-Slav Congress of Belgrade (December 1946), the BCP envisaged "eternal association with the Soviet Union and fraternal cooperation and proximity with all Slav nations" for the future of a free and independent Bulgarian nation.[66] This new Pan-Slav movement denounced aggression and imperialism, whilst asserting that it would develop peace, democracy, and cultural progress, because the national interests of Bulgaria dictated Slav unity.[67] All the Slav peoples are depicted as members of one large family; Bulgaria was seen as belonging to a community of nations, the family of Slav nations. However, internal enemies in each Slav country, that is, national apostates, played the role of a Trojan horse and sought to disunite the Slavs. National apostates were seen as serving German, and later American, imperialism and inciting a civil war on behalf of the imperialists.[68] Most importantly, since camps are fundamentally martial phenomena, camp mentality militarises both domestic and international political space; reduces individuals into soldiers; and, thus, solidifies the power of the hegemonic political agent of the relevant camp, that is the BCP and, more extensively, the USSR and Stalin.

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[64] References to the Soviet Union liberating Bulgaria twice (once in the Russo-Turkish war in 1877–1878 and again in the Second World War), and slogans about Slav unity are frequent in the proclamations of the Fatherland Front and the BCP. See, for instance, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 7, Archival Unit 3 (September 1944): 1, The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 1): 98, The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 2): 339–340 and The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 3): 364.

[65] Abrams (2004): 158–162. According to the Slavic manifesto issued by Polish communists in 1946, "the Polish nation has understood that the contemporary Slavic movement constitutes the natural expression of our national instincts, of the instincts of survival and self-defence", cited in Behrends (2009): 450.

[66] Rabotnichesko Delo #284, 06.12.1946.

[67] Rabotnitsesko Delo #230, 18.06.1945.

[68] Rabotnichesko Delo #135, 24.02.1945 and #284, 06.12.1946.

3.2.e *Non-Slav Socialist Friends*

Bulgaria, of course, also had non-Slav friends within the socialist bloc. Along with the forging of this bloc, the foundation of the Cominform, and the signing of 'agreements of friendship, solidarity and mutual assistance' were key elements in the articulation of a particular discourse which linked Bulgaria to non-Slav nations. The logic of equivalence was deployed so that any disparity in 'blood' between Slav and non-Slav nations would be surmounted. An excerpt from Dimitrov's speech on the case of signing an agreement between Bulgaria and Albania provides a good example of this kind of argument:

> …the Albanian people are not a Slav one in terms of blood. Nevertheless, concerning their national spirit, will and heroism, concerning their love of freedom and the independence of their fatherland, the Albanian people are certainly a friendly nation of us; it is identical with Slav nations and belongs to the anti-imperialist bloc.[69]

In the same vein, an old friendship and cooperation with Romania, as well as parallel sufferings and strivings, were projected in order to rationalise a bilateral agreement. In Ottoman times, Romania was supposed to have been a 'Promised Land' for Bulgarian revolutionaries. Romanian soldiers had served in the Russian Army which liberated Bulgaria in 1877–78. Both countries suffered from the imperialist yoke and their national resources had been plundered by foreign appropriators in collaboration with treacherous domestic rulers. The wars they had fought against each other were the result of imperialist conspiracies. Following the collapse of fascism and chauvinism, Bulgaria and Romania had now become unconditional allies.[70] In this context, room was allowed for non-kin partners in what was mostly represented a nationalised kinship camp.

3.3 *The Nation and its Enemies on the International Level*

The socialist anti-imperialist camp was contrasted to the capitalist imperialist one, comprised of a set of reactionary, fascist, bellicose, imperialist, and nationalistic nations. Nations of the capitalist bloc were called reactionary, since they were fighting any advance towards

[69] Rabotnichesko Delo #293, 15.12.1947.
[70] Rabotnichesko Delo #159, 13.07.1947, #160, 15.07.1947, and #20, 27.01.1948.

socialism. Reactionary nations were still competing to gain markets and spheres of influence, whereas progressive countries had already attained cooperation, equality, and peace. The capitalist bloc was, even indirectly, denounced as a successor to the fascist Axis, as we shall see below. Chervenkov claimed that reactionary forces and capitalist trusts and cartels of the West were inciting a new war.[71] The imperialist bloc was identified with the enemy of democracy and independence, as imperialism was attacked for enslaving peoples. Nationalistic nations of the imperialist bloc were denounced as warmongers who pursued military-strategic initiatives, economic expansionism, and the financial enslavement of other nations. "Reactionary, rapacious, nationalist and cosmopolitan bourgeois ideology is in contrast with the progressive, patriotic and internationalist ideology of the proletariat".[72] In this way, the opposite camp was furnished with capacities antipodal to those of the socialist camp; camp-thinking designated international as well as domestic enemies.

3.3.a *The Past and the Present Worst Enemy of the Slav Peoples*

Solidarity, mutual assistance and unity within a camp necessitate the discursive construction of a formidable rival. Indeed, the definition of Germany as the common, eternal enemy of all the Slav peoples[73] contributed to the idea of Slav unity. The First Congress of the Fatherland Front stated that proximity and collaboration between the Slav nations would defend them from German aggression and would guarantee that their nations would flourish.[74] The Slav family of nations was juxtaposed with the Teutons. The clash between socialism and fascism was articulated in part as a clash between Slavs and Germans.

The imperialism of the post-war period was personified by the USA,[75] which took over the role of Germany—the old enemy of Bulgaria, Slav nations, and anti-imperialist forces—in the quest for world dominance. It was argued that France and the UK had been materially

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[71] Rabotnichesko Delo #284, 06.12.1946.
[72] Obretenov (1950): 4.
[73] The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 3): 545, Rabotnichesko Delo #284, 06.12.1946.
[74] Manifestos and resolutions (1945): 17.
[75] According to Zhdanov, the main force in the imperialist camp, in Loth (1988): 160. The vilification of the USA and the West in general became a common topic in the rhetoric of all communist parties of Eastern Europe; on the Polish one, see Behrends (2009): 454.

weakened because of the war.[76] The USA embodied the number one enemy of the USSR, the socialist bloc, and Bulgaria, in particular. The displacement of the inimical subject is evident in the following eloquent excerpt from Stalin:

> Hitler began his work of unleashing war by proclaiming a race theory, declaring that only German-speaking people constituted a superior nation… Churchill sets out to unleash a race theory that only English-speaking nations are superior nations, who are called upon to decide the destinies of the entire world… [Churchill claims that] superior nations should rule over the rest of the nations of the world.[77]

In other words, the English-speaking nations endangered the national independence, socialist development and advancement of small nations. Members of the USA-dominated bloc were regarded as being coerced in contrast to the freely established socialist bloc. The USA was said to personify the evil nation, which strove to subjugate peoples in order to achieve her imperialist interests, whereas the Soviet Union appeared to be the defender of peoples' independence.

Clear evidence of American imperialist expansionism and means of subordination to the USA, it was argued, constituted the Truman Doctrine and the Marshal Plan,[78] which it was claimed, had been fashioned by American monopolies essentially in order to maximise their profits.[79] The Marshal Plan was seen as an attempt by the USA to interfere in the domestic affairs of European countries on a large scale and to purchase and violate the state sovereignty of each recipient.[80] As Poptomov stated, any kind of loan or assistance given by the USA aimed to subordinate the recipient to the USA in economic and political terms. He added that the invocation of communist danger was merely a cloak to conceal the USA's imperialist expansionism.[81]

In this international situation, the main objective of the anti-imperialist front was to stop the advance of imperialists and to protect the national independence and sovereignty of each nation-member of the

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[76] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 33 (October 1947): 115.

[77] 'Stalin on the October Revolution…': 10.

[78] Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 33 (October 1947): 115.

[79] Rabotnichesko Delo #156, 10.07.1947.

[80] Rabotnichesko Delo #144, 26.06.1947. Similar issues were raised by the MKP, Mevius (2005): 217.

[81] Rabotnichesko Delo #115, 22.05.1947.

bloc. The Fatherland Front, in particular, considered its primary task to be ensuring Bulgaria's national sovereignty against imperialist aggression and keeping the country outside the American-dominated bloc.[82] It was, then, inferred that Bulgaria's national interests dictated her integration into the socialist bloc, where she could preserve her national independence and state sovereignty. On the other hand, such a well-defined evil, which threatened the independence and prosperity of the country, could explain some of the domestic difficulties and authoritative measures undertaken by the Bulgarian regime (e.g. low productivity attributed to sabotage, violence of the Militia etc.).

3.3.b *Neighbouring Enemy Nations of Bulgaria*

As well as the most significant imperialist enemies, who were common to all the Slav and socialist countries, Bulgaria faced particular enemies in her own surroundings. These were countries (Greece and Turkey in particular), which belonged to the opposite camp and were thus, by definition, hostile to Bulgaria's independence, integrity, and prosperity and attempted to cause difficulties for her.

As the BCP claimed, Bulgaria had to be in a state of constant alert due to recurrent border incidents, provoked by the Greek monarchist-fascists and Turks, as well as the slanderous campaign of the Greek and Turkish press.[83] For instance, the Bulgarian communist regime had to defend the country against the results of an international inquiry commissioned by the United Nations to inspect Bulgaria's south frontier; the commission eventually supported the Greek claims that armed paramilitary groups were being concentrated along the Greek border and that the Bulgarian Army trained Greek partisans.[84] As diplomatic counter-offensives, the Bulgarian regime protested against air trespass by Greek planes and claimed that Greek armed units had invaded Bulgarian territory under the pretext of pursuing partisans.[85] The Greek state was also accused of fomenting sabotage and diversions in Bulgaria and of supporting the treacherous opposition.[86] The fundamental reason for bad Greek-Bulgarian relations, however, lay in

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[82] Second Fatherland Front Congress (1948): 10.
[83] Second Fatherland Front Congress (1948): 10 and Rabotnichesko Delo #275, 25.11.1947.
[84] Rabotnichesko Delo #281, 03.12.1946, and Rabotnichesko Delo #282, 04.12.1946.
[85] Rabotnichesko Delo #166, 22.07.1947.
[86] Rabotnichesko Delo #220, 21.09.1947.

Greek claims of a 'strategic borderline' with Bulgaria, that is, the annexation of a strip of Bulgarian land from Greece, and the demands for high war reparations.

The Bulgarian regime strongly criticised the Turkish government after an incident surrounding the crash of two Turkish aeroplanes (February 1948). Kolarov declared that Bulgaria was a sovereign state and it was her right and duty to maintain the inviolability of her territory and air space. The government vehemently criticised the anti-Bulgarian campaign led by the Turkish 'reactionary' government after the event.[87] Besides, the Fatherland Front government feared that the significant Turkish minority living in Bulgaria could develop relations with Turkey or orchestrate spy rings within Bulgarian territory.[88]

Incidents involving either Greece or Turkey were used to mobilise support inside Bulgaria. The meetings[89] held in Sofia on the occasion of the kidnapping of three Bulgarian frontier guards by Greek militaries, and the 'constant invasion of Greek monarchist-fascists' are revealing. On national grounds, the Bulgarian people were united to express their support for and confidence in the government. In this way, by invoking national dangers, the BCP attempted to bring the nation together, create national cohesion, and present its government as able to solve national crises. At the same time, it exploited a decades-long national discourse which presented Greece and Turkey as Bulgaria's national enemies (notably centuries-long subjugation by the Turks, and the annexation of a large part of Macedonia and Western Thrace by the Greeks).

3.4 *National Questions*

Bulgaria's relations with neighbouring countries were mainly affected by two national questions. The Thracian and the Macedonian question will be discussed here, since they illustrate two important parameters of the BCP's national discourse. First, the interlocutor in each case was different in terms of the Cold War world division. Yugoslavia was an 'insider' (but after 1948, an 'outsider') of the 'socialist and democratic

[87] Rabotnichesko Delo #45, 25.02.1948.

[88] Rabotnichesko Delo #83, 09.04.1948. Dimitrov declared that no Turkish national movement in Bulgaria could be recognised, because it would generate a Turkish agency. He added that Turkey should go to Asia, in Kalinova and Baeva (2003): 203.

[89] Rabotnichesko Delo #86, 13.04.1948.

international front', whereas Greece was a member of the bloc hostile to Bulgaria. Second, both questions clarify aspects of the malleable discourse of the BCP with regard to the national question. It was a particularly incoherent discourse, because the Comintern's resolutions on national questions, a Stalinist framework of the nation's definition and nationalities' policy, the BCP's contemporary political considerations and the nationalism of the Bulgarian communists generated a number of contradictions in the BCP's approach. Only by taking account of all these parameters can we cast light upon the contradictory discourses and policies of the BCP concerning the national question of Bulgaria at that time.

3.4.a *The Thracian Question*

Without doubt, any national question collocates with nationalist arguments. As we shall see, the Thracian question involves the confrontation of Greek claims on Bulgarian territory and the defence of Bulgaria's integrity in parallel with claims over Greek territory. Disputes over territory featured the issue of land, a fundamental facet of national identity.[90] However, as authors of nationalism have pointed out, the idea that an identified area of land belongs to a nation is not politically innocent, because attempts to sacralise territory and landscape disguise the coercion and political considerations that lie behind border demarcation.[91] As was the case with Bulgarian communist leaders, Bulgarian claims for the restoration of Western Thrace recall the Stalinist definition of nation and nationality, that nation is "formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture".[92] More especially, Bulgaria rested her claims on the following grounds: ethnographical and linguistic (the area had been settled by a Bulgarian speaking population for centuries until 1924); territorial (geomorphology, geographical limits); economic (commercial reasons), and psychological (the national emotions of Bulgarians as disunited without Western Thrace).[93] It could be argued that the psychological component also fashions the argument that about 150,000 refugees to Bulgaria from

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[90] Smith A. (1999): 14.
[91] Spencer and Wollman (2002): 86–88, and O'Dowd and Wilson (1996): 6.
[92] Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question (1913)*, in Bruce (1973): 60.
[93] Bulgaria before (1946): 11–14, Bulgaria claims Western Thrace V (1946): 5, Memorandum (1946): 3–12, Western Thrace (1946): passim.

Western Thrace needed to be repatriated to their birthplace and the land of their ancestors.[94]

The Bulgarian communist leaders attempted to make the Thracian question conform to their own nationalist discourse. After 9 September 1944, it was maintained, Bulgaria had been liberated from the aggressive politics that the dynasty and fascist rulers of Bulgaria had pursued in the past. Furthermore, the new, peace-loving Fatherland Front Bulgaria was punishing the culprits of the last Bulgarian occupation of Greek and Yugoslav territory. It was also declared that Bulgaria would abstain from aggressive and revisionist policies, implying that she would have no pretensions to territory outside Bulgaria. Such declarations, however, contradicted Bulgarian official claims on an outlet to the Aegean Sea, that is, the restoration of Western Thrace to Bulgaria, as stipulated in the Bucharest agreement[95] (1913), despite the fact that Bulgaria was in essence a defeated country in the war. Western Thrace, which was declared a Bulgarian province,[96] had been annexed by the Greek state decades earlier and deprived of any Bulgarian element. At the Peace Conference, Kolarov based his argumentation for the restoration of Western Thrace to Bulgaria on wars (the Balkan Wars), on treaties (the Bucharest Treaty of 1913), on the objection of the Protocol of Lausanne (1924), and on the occupation of Western Thrace from Bulgaria between 1912 and 1919[97]—deeds that the 'damned' dynasty and fascist Bulgarian governments had committed.

Yugov contrasted the bad nationalism of the old order with the good patriotism of the communists declaring that:

> …the concession to Bulgaria of an outlet to the Aegean Sea was not a chauvinistic ideal of Filov, Boris, and Ferdinand, but a vital necessity of Bulgaria, her own struggle.[98]

Yet, there was continuity marking Bulgarian nationalism, since organisations and deeds of the 'bourgeois' or 'fascist' past were manipulated by the new communist regime. Most importantly, the BCP tolerated

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[94] Bulgaria before (1946): 14 and Bulgaria claims Western Thrace III (1946): 9.

[95] Kolarov presented this demand before the Peace Conference of Paris in 1946, Bulgaria before (1946): 16. See, also, Bulgaria claims Western Thrace V (1946): 4 and 8.

[96] Rabotnichesko Delo #102, 11.05.1946 (Kolarov).

[97] Bulgaria before (1946): 5–6, Rabotnichesko Delo #210, 15.09.1946, and #89, 23.04.1946.

[98] Rabotnichesko Delo #102, 11.05.1946.

and allied itself with the *Thracian Organisation*, a Great-Bulgarian chauvinist organisation of the past[99] and a representative of the Thracian émigrés in Bulgaria, on condition that it would toe the Party line with regard to the Thracian question and rally the Thracian émigrés round the platform of the Fatherland Front.[100] On Dimitrov's instructions,[101] the *Thracian Organisation* addressed a Memorandum[102] to the Foreign Minister of Great Britain, Ernest Bevin. Although, as Dimitrov directed, the integration of Western Thrace into Bulgaria was not plainly expressed, in order that the international situation of Bulgaria would not deteriorate,[103] the Bulgarian character of Western Thrace was emphasised using communist phraseology.[104] Within this context, the *Thracian Organisation* staged protest rallies with slogans, such as 'Thrace is a Bulgarian land', 'We [Thracian refugees] want to be repatriated', 'A fair solution of the Thracian question is a guarantee for a lasting peace in the Balkans', and 'Fighting greetings to comrades Dimitrov and Kolarov for their brave defence of the Bulgarian national cause'. The Thracian population was dressed in national costume, while the Thracian question was subordinated to the common Slav cause.[105] Moreover, the Party seriously considered sending a delegation of the *Thracian Organisation* to Paris in order to support the 'restoration of Western Thrace to the motherland'.[106]

The Thracian question gave the communists the opportunity first to determine the national interests of Bulgaria and then to represent the Fatherland Front as the vanguard of the nation. More especially, the Bulgarian communists defended the Bulgarian cause at the Paris Conference, which was not limited to claims on Western Thrace. It ran up

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[99] According to Vidinski, a BCP member charged of minorities' issues, in BCP Records, Fund 1, Inventory 25, Archival Unit 75 (1945): 8.

[100] BCP Records, Fund 1, Inventory 8, Archival Unit 79 (1946): 10 and BCP Records, Fund 1, Inventory 8, Archival Unit 82 (1946): 6.

[101] BCP Records, Fund 1, Inventory 8, Archival Unit 82 (1946): 6.

[102] Memorandum (1946). It was compiled in a project written by Ormandzhiev, who was to be charged with Great-Bulgarian chauvinism two years later; see BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743 (1948): 100 and BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745 (1948): 84.

[103] BCP Records, Fund 1, Inventory 8, Archival Unit 82 (1946): 6.

[104] "…[at] the Berlin Conference…upon the request of Austria, Hungary, Germany with the view of protecting the route to the East for their *imperialist* aims, cut off [Thrace]", "the *chauvinist policy of expansion* pursued by Czar Ferdinand, that *German agent*" (emphasis added), Memorandum…(1946): 7 and 9 respectively.

[105] Rabotnichesko Delo #168, 29.07.1946.

[106] BCP Records, Fund 1, Inventory 8, Archival Unit 126 (1946): 1 and Rabotnichesko Delo #168, 29.07.1946.

Zhendov, Rabotnichesko Delo #227, 02.10.1946. In Restaurant 'Paris': "My apologies, Mr X-fellow ('X' was a group of Greek monarchist-fascists), the Bulgarian meat has proven very tough and we cannot serve it!".

against the Greek project for a 'strategic frontier-line with Bulgaria', that is the annexation of the Rodopian district to Greece. For this purpose, the Bulgarian delegation deployed economic and historical arguments. Kolarov asserted that Greece coveted the lucrative tobacco production in that area.[107] He claimed that Great-Greek chauvinists were seeking an economic stranglehold of Bulgaria.[108] Kolarov also cited a set of historical injustices committed against Bulgaria: the uneven territorial compensation of Bulgaria by the Great Powers in comparison with her sacrifices in the struggle against the Ottoman Empire and fascism.[109] Thus, the restoration of Western Thrace to Bulgaria was presented as an issue of international justice.[110] The Paris Conference, where Bulgaria expected the backing of the USSR, gave the communists the chance to endorse the significance of Slav unity and belonging to the socialist camp.

On another level, the Thracian question proved ideal for domestic consumption, as it exposed international friends and enemies before the Bulgarian nation. Thus, the BCP constantly claimed that the impasse in negotiations with Greece on the Thracian question was due to the so-called monarchist-fascist Greek government. Dimitrov explicitly rejected the "unrealistic imperialist pretensions of Great-Greek chauvinists to Bulgarian lands and reparations".[111] The Greek fascist regime, which was accused of seeking to plunder foreign lands, was contrasted with the friendly Romanian democratic one, which had peacefully and justly resolved the question of Southern Dobrudzha. Domestic consumption of the Thracian question buttressed the Bulgarian communists in presenting the Fatherland Front government as a national one, which was able to further the Bulgarian cause and invoke national acquiescence.[112] If the discourse concerning the Thracian question seemed to be straightforward, that concerning the Macedonian question seemed to be more controversial.

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[107] Bulgaria before (1946): 5 and Rabotnichesko Delo #102, 11.05.1946.

[108] Rabotnichesko Delo #209, 14.09.1946.

[109] Bulgaria before (1946): 5–8 and 14–16, Rabotnichesko Delo #200, 04.09.1946 (speech of Kolarov), Rabotnichesko Delo #209, 14.09.1946.

[110] Rabotnichesko Delo #201, 05.09.1946, and Rabotnichesko Delo #209, 14.09.1946.

[111] Rabotnichesko Delo #182, 14.08.1946.

[112] During a heated debate with the opposition in the Bulgarian parliament, Kolarov declared that "when I supported the right of Bulgaria to an outlet to the Aegean Sea in Paris, the opposition weakened our [Bulgarian] arguments saying that there is no freedom in Bulgaria", Rabotnichesko Delo #285, 07.12.1946.

3.4.b *The Macedonian Question*

The Macedonian question is much more complicated than the Thracian one for a number of reasons. First, Macedonia was divided between three states, each of which had its own interests. Second, Macedonia had been claimed by three states and was partitioned after extensive armed conflicts and the two Balkan Wars. Last but not least, Macedonia had been the apple of discord between Balkan states for many decades. At the risk of oversimplification then, we could identify the official claims of the three states as follows. Greek official nationalism claimed Macedonia for mainly historical and religious reasons. Titoist Yugoslavia envisaged a unified Macedonia as an integral part of Yugoslavia. The historical position of Bulgarian nationalism was that Macedonia was a Bulgarian land and the population living in Macedonia were Bulgarians. After 1944, as we shall see, the BCP developed a contradictory discourse, although this always assumed the close affinity of Macedonians and Bulgarians. Thus, depending on the room that Bulgaria's adherence to the socialist bloc allowed for manoeuvring, the Bulgarian communists could recognise a Macedonian nation and, at the same time, underline the Bulgarian past and cultural elements of this nation.

Interpreted in a certain way, the Macedonian question could potentially support the thesis that the BCP was anti-nationalist and consequently internationalist. Current literature sees the Macedonian question from different viewpoints. Some Bulgarian authors, such as Kalinova and Baeva, have underlined the weak international position of Bulgaria after the Second World War and the contradictory theses of the Comintern on the Macedonian question, which were 'against the national interests of Bulgaria'.[113] Indeed, Bulgaria's position was inferior to that of Yugoslavia: first, Bulgaria was a defeated country in the Second World War, whilst Yugoslavia was a victorious one, and second, Bulgarian communists depended on the Red Army, whereas Yugoslav communists took power without the support of the Red Army. Nevertheless, within the socialist bloc Bulgaria had some advantages: the Bulgarian communists were more loyal to the Soviet Union than the Yugoslavs, Dimitrov had a long, very close cooperation with Stalin, and Tito's hegemonic projects in the Balkan area were to be dismissed by Stalin. In terms of a potential contradiction between the

[113] Kalinova and Baeva (2003): 74 and 77.

Comintern's theses and Bulgaria's national interests, it seems that the authors took for granted their own interpretation of Bulgaria's national interests and overlooked the turbulence that the Macedonian question caused within the Comintern and among interested communist parties.

Other authors claim that Bulgarian communist leaders of that time acquiesced in the relinquishment of Pirin Macedonia to the People's Republic of Macedonia. Somewhat paradoxically, Bulgarian and Macedonian nationalists converge on this view. Angelov (1999), from the Bulgarian side, speaks about 'national treason'. He argues that to realise their policy on Macedonia the Yugoslav communists:

> …wisely manipulated the complicated domestic political situation of Bulgaria, her weak international position, and the lack of national interests of the Bulgarian communists regarding the Macedonian question.[114]

Macedonian authors, such as Karobar (1986) and Neshovich (1986), see Dimitrov's era as a "path of reason, understanding, and equitable intergovernmental cooperation".[115] Thus, the then 'non-chauvinistic' Bulgarian communist leadership would forward Macedonia's unification. All these theses cannot adequately explain why the Bulgarian communists did not immediately and unconditionally cede Pirin Macedonia to the People's Republic of Macedonia.

King offers what seems the most credible explanation regarding the Macedonian question: "the Bulgarian communists saw Balkan Federation as a way of regaining Macedonia"[116] no matter whether in geopolitical or cultural terms. They envisaged an independent Macedonia, which due to her historical and ethnic links with Bulgaria would gravitate towards Bulgaria. This view could explain why the Bulgarian communists pursued an essentially tripartite South Slav Federation, wherein there would be no border between Bulgaria and unified Macedonia, and continued to advocate a separate Macedonian nation after 1948. Such a standpoint, however, needs to be underpinned by an in-depth analysis of the BCP's discourse on the Macedonian question; at

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[114] Angelov (1999): 290.

[115] Neshovich (1986): 144.

[116] King (1973): 61. Moore (1984): 194 also seems to share King's mind. In Dragoicheva's letter of 27 October 1943 to Dramaliev, it is stated: "There is no surprise if the independent Macedonia wants to reunite with Bulgaria…", in Dragoicheva (1979): 312; in her letter of 16 November 1943, she speculates that this reunion will take place within the framework of the future Balkan federation, ibid., 316.

the same time, all the contradictions that distinguish this discourse and Bulgarian communist policies need to be discussed and explained.

The argument here proposes that the Macedonian question should be seen within the framework of the formation of the socialist bloc in general and the Bulgarian-Yugoslavian rapprochement in particular. Bulgarian drafts for the unification of Macedonia and the project of 'national and cultural self-determination' should be understood as political manoeuvres aimed at easing this rapprochement. Close analysis of them provides some evidence to support the view that the Bulgarian communists were not likely to relinquish Pirin Macedonia to Yugoslavia[117] and that they perceived Macedonians as a part of the Bulgarian nation. This discourse is full of significant contradictions, however, due to the inclusion of both Leninist (e.g. self-determination of nations) and nationalist (e.g. arguments about culture and language) elements.

The Macedonian question was of international strategic significance for the socialist bloc. It aimed to ease the Bulgarian-Yugoslavian rapprochement and stabilise the incorporation of Yugoslavia into the 'camp of peace and democracy'[118] and the 'anti-imperialist struggle'.[119] Kostov claimed that "keeping the Balkans away from English domination lies mainly in the cooperation of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia".[120] Stalin himself recognised the enormous historical significance that the alliance between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia would have for the future of Slav unity and the socialist bloc. As he feared a revival of German military strength and German aggression, he perceived the alliance of the two Balkan countries as the basis of a union of all Slav peoples, who were to assist and defend each other in the certain case that Germany would rise again.[121]

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[117] The example of Macedonian emissaries sent by the People's Republic of Macedonia is striking. The BCP turned against them because they propagandised the immediate and unconditional incorporation of Pirin Macedonia into the People's Republic of Macedonia. For the problems they created for the BCP see BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 191 (October 1944): 15; BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 916 (April 1948): 1; BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 7 (August 1946): 1; and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 546. At the same time, despite compromises on 'administrative autonomy' made to the Yugoslavs, the BCP 'kept firm control over government bodies' in Pirin, Shoup (1968): 146–147.

[118] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 918 (April 1948): 6–7.

[119] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 21 (April 1948): 21–22.

[120] The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1173.

[121] Banac (2003): 357.

By December 1944, Dimitrov had already discussed proposals[122] for the military, economic and political union of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, which was considered the first step towards future unification. Thence the federation of the Southern Slavs could become a *fait accompli* before any English objection. Consequently, the penetration of English and American influence in the area would be effectively avoided.[123] Within this political framework, a South Slav Federation was being planned;[124] the BCP assented to the idea of an independent and unified Macedonia, and to the consequent integration of Pirin Macedonia into the People's Republic of Macedonia.[125] The drafts for the South Slav Federation drawn by the two sides (December 1944) had some significant differences and inconsistencies. The Bulgarian communists linked together the unification of Macedonia and the establishment of a South Slav Federation, despite the attempts of the Yugoslav communists to realise the unification of Macedonia irrespective of the issue of the federation.[126] The Bled Agreement, as the climax of Bulgarian-Yugoslavian negotiations on the Macedonian question, designated that the unification of Macedonia was to be realised *only*[127] after a South Slav Federation had been set up.[128] The BCP also linked together the incorporation of Pirin Macedonia into the People's Republic of Macedonia and the restoration of the 'Western Border Region'[129] to Bulgaria, a condition included in all drafts.

A central and thorny problem of Bulgarian-Yugoslavian negotiations on the future South Slav Federation was its form. Whilst Yugoslavia proposed drafts on a federation consisting of seven states, Bulgaria proposed a Bulgarian-Yugoslavian united state. For this reason, she deliberately chose the name 'South Slav Federation', instead of Yugo-

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[122] Michev (1994): 191 ff. notes that such proposals were being developed since September 1944.

[123] The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1165–1166 and Michev (1994): 64–65.

[124] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 918 (April 1948): 7–8.

[125] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 191 (October-November 1944): 15 and 24, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 104 (April 1946): 3, and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 3 (August 1946): 19 (Dimitrov's thesis).

[126] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 2, Archival Unit 17: 32 (Dimitrov's diary) and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 21 (April 1948): 17 (Chankov's thesis).

[127] Emphasis added.

[128] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 916 (April 1948): 1, BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 917 (1948): 1, and BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 918 (April 1948): 9.

[129] The Bulgarian territory annexed by Yugoslavia after the First World War.

slavia, for the future federation. Moreover, Bulgaria was vaguely contemplating Macedonia as an equal member within the federal state, most probably as a third federal unit,[130] since Bulgaria opposed a seven state federation whilst Macedonia is quoted separately in the drafts and both sides had declared their support for an independent and unified Macedonia.[131] This was in accordance with earlier policies of the Bulgarian communists treating Macedonia as an independent state, separate from Yugoslavia. Tempo protested that Bulgarian propaganda claimed that:

> …our [Bulgarian] National Army is fighting shoulder to shoulder with the glorious Red Army, the National Liberation Army of the Marshal Tito, and the Macedonian partisans and brigades,[132]

as if Macedonian brigades were not a part of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army. The BCP also supported the right of Pirin citizens to maintain Bulgarian citizenship[133] and the necessity for the coexistence of Bulgarians and Macedonians.[134] Given that the Party took for granted the historical, ethnic, and cultural links between Macedonians and Bulgarians[135] and anticipated loose borders of Macedonia with both Yugoslavia and Bulgaria,[136] it could be argued that the Bulgarian communists reckoned that an independent Macedonia would gravitate towards Bulgaria.

The plan for a South Slav Federation met with formidable difficulties from the outset. As early as 26 December 1944, Molotov charac-

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[130] The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1174–1196 passim.

[131] See article 6 of the first Bulgarian draft: "the two contracting parties wholly recognise the right of the Macedonian nation to self-determination", and article 5 of the second Bulgarian draft: "recognition of the Macedonian nation to self-determination…after the establishment of the common federal state of the South Slavs…[and] the unification of Macedonia…[Macedonia would be] an equal part in the federation of the South Slavs", in The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1186 and 1188, whereas only Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were considered equals according to the Bulgarian drafts.

[132] Cited in King (1973): 62.

[133] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 7 (August 1946): 2.

[134] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 7 (August 1946): 2 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 21 (April 1948): 20–22.

[135] See, for instance, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 546 (September 1948): 5–6; The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1133; and Michev (1994): 461.

[136] See article 5 of the *Resolution of the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee of the BCP (9 August 1946)*, in Results of the Census (1986): 317: "when there is a union of the Pirin area with the People's Republic of Macedonia it should be carried out in such a way that there should be no customs or any other border between Macedonia and Bulgaria just as there is now no such border between the People's Republic of Macedonia and the other units of the Federal Republics of Yugoslavia".

terised the plan of a South Slav Federation as inept, while England and the USA were against it in advance.[137] Meanwhile, Bulgaria modified her position vis-à-vis Yugoslavia, with the proviso that Stalin approved the Bulgarian drafts of two federal states. He vehemently criticised the ambitious proposals of the Yugoslav communists, as he saw that they would entail the political hegemony of Tito in the Balkans (seven federal states, Greek Macedonia, Albania and parts of Austria and Hungary).[138] Finally, the Stalin-Tito conflict (summer 1948) did away with the vision of a South Slav Federation. The unification of Macedonia was to be realised for the common Slav wealth and the internationalist communist cause. The main objective of negotiations between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia was the rapprochement of the two countries and the reassurance of the Yugoslavian membership in the 'socialist and democratic international front'. Once Yugoslavia broke with the socialist bloc, Bulgaria ceased any negotiations with the so-called nationalist, chauvinistic, anti-Bulgarian Titoist clique, which, it now argued, had gone over to the imperialistic front.[139]

Negotiations on the Bulgarian-Yugoslavian rapprochement involved the relinquishment of Pirin Macedonia to the People's Republic of Macedonia, which had repercussions. As a result of moves towards the foundation of a South Slav Federation, Bulgaria began to apply a project of 'national and cultural self-determination' in the Pirin district, a series of measures[140] which it anticipated might ease the rapprochement of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Cultural exchanges between populations on both sides of Macedonia (in Bulgarian and Yugoslavian territory) were to be advanced; activities and achievements of the People's Republic of Macedonia were to be popularised in the Pirin district; Macedonian language, literature and history were to be taught

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[137] Michev (1994): 202–212 passim.

[138] The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1174–1176 and Volkov (1997): 65–66.

[139] As early as November 1944, Poptomov, in his mission to Belgrade, claimed that the incorporation of the Petrich district (Pirin Macedonia) into Yugoslavia would be realised *only* if Yugoslavia would be within the sphere of influence of the USSR. Otherwise, if she was within the sphere of influence of England, *then* Yugoslavian Macedonia should have been incorporated into Bulgaria, BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 191 (November 1944): 66. See, also, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 546 (September 1948): 6 and Michev (1994): 461 (citing a speech of Chankov in October 1948).

[140] It was decided at the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee of the BCP, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 7 (August 1946): 1. Stalin had also recommended cultural self-determination for Pirin Macedonia, since June 1946, in The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1269.

in schools; Macedonian bookshops and institutes were to be founded; intercommunication within the population was to be facilitated.[141]

The project of 'national and cultural self-determination' of the Pirin population was essentially tactical and instrumental. The BCP subordinated the Macedonian national question to the formation of a South Slav Federation, to the interests of the Eastern Socialist Bloc, and the Bulgarian nation within it. The right of the Macedonian nationality to self-determination, even secession, depended on:

> …the interests of our [Bulgarian] nation, the progressive movement of the Balkans, the unification of South Slavs…the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the USSR as well as with all the Slavs.[142]

The project of 'national and cultural self-determination' of the Pirin district had a number of side effects. Ceding a status of self-determination to the Pirin population implied recognition of a Macedonian language and nationality. Party politics reflected a Stalinist axiom that 'the most important characteristic that distinguished one nationality from another was language'. As Slezkine[143] points out, according to the Soviet nationalities policy of the 1920s each recognised nationality should have a distinct and different language. Under the project of 'cultural self-determination' then, a Macedonian language in the Pirin district was to be institutionalised. This resulted in difficulties at local level, however, and led to criticism from high ranking communists. First of all, the local Party apparatus was unwilling to implement the (inconsistent) directives and instructions of the Central Committee on means of 'cultural self-determination'. Second, the Party apparatus met with tremendous difficulties in its efforts to persuade the population to learn the newly modernised, official and prescriptive Macedonian language; moreover, it seems that there were rank and files in Pirin who felt that the People's Republic of Macedonia should be associated with Bulgaria.[144] Third, high ranking Party members, such as Poptomov, strongly criticised the process of "artificially and by coercion Macedonisation of the whole Pirin population through propaganda".[145] A

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[141] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 298 (July 1947): 7–9, BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 917 (April 1948): 1.

[142] The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1216–1218 (Poptomov's lecture).

[143] Slezkine (1996): 215.

[144] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 21 (April 1948): 2, 9, and 15; Shoup (1968): 153.

[145] The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1264 and BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 918 (April 1948): 15.

few days after the Titoist schism, Poptomov reported to the Political Bureau and the Secretary of the BCP that the majority of the Pirin population was Bulgarian, spoke Bulgarian and had a Bulgarian national consciousness.[146] Nevertheless, he had earlier acknowledged the politics of 'cultural self-determination' and he recognised the People's Republic of Macedonia as a model of achieving the right of the Macedonian nation to self-determination.[147]

According to the Soviet nationalities' model, each nationality should settle in a distinct space, province, district or village. Slezkine[148] suggests that, in the late 1930s, collective ethnicity became increasingly territorial. This theoretical framework can shed light on Bulgarian communist methods regarding the census of 1946[149] and the reasons why an inseparable Pirin Macedonia of one ethnicity was taken for granted[150] (an approach based on Stalin's theory of the nation and nationality). This interpretation can more efficiently explain the contradictions of that census rather than interpretations claiming that the census aimed to ease the relinquishment of Pirin Macedonia to the People's Republic of Macedonia. After manipulation, intrigues, strict instructions to the local communists and violence, the census showed a strong Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, which comprised the overwhelming majority of the Pirin district.[151] Nevertheless, the Bulgarian communists had preserved a tool in their nationalist arsenal: only 28,611 out of 160,641 Macedonians declared that their mother-tongue was Macedonian;[152] in effect, a Macedonian minority speaking Bulgarian was recognised.

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[146] Michev (1994): 438. Kostov, in the Second Session of the Cominform in Bucharest (June 1948), underlined exactly the same, in Kalinova and Baeva (2003): 187.

[147] Michev (1994): 438.

[148] Slezkine (1996): 224.

[149] According to Angelov (1999): 125–143, 63.6% of the Pirin population self-determined as Macedonians, 21.5% Bulgarians and 11.5% Pomaks. Significantly, the percentage of the Macedonian population appears more dense in areas close to the People's Republic of Macedonia (e.g. Petrich 85–90%), and sparser in areas close to central Bulgaria (e.g. Blagoevgrad/Gorna Dzhumaya 45–50%) in Results of the census (1986): 324.

[150] See, for instance, an instruction of the Chief Direction of Statistics in Angelov (1990): 56.

[151] Angelov (1990). Michev (1994): 272–286, also, states that the census results were directed by the BCP. Nonetheless, there is a little evidence of the free character of the census, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 21 (April 1948): 8.

[152] Angelov (1999): 125–143.

As the procedure of the realisation of the project of 'national and cultural self-determination' of the Pirin district shows, the intention of the BCP was to announce it, but not fully apply it. More importantly, the Bulgarian communists retained firm control over Party and governmental organs in Pirin Macedonia.[153] As a result, 'a little had been done' regarding each of the measures designated by the above project as local members of the BCP claimed.[154] As a Party member from Razlog observes, literature programmes in schools and many institutions still had an almost totally Bulgarian character in April 1948.[155] The resolution of the 16th plenum of the Central Committee of the BCP (July 1948) acknowledges that there was no completely clear and consistent Party line on the Macedonian question.[156]

Despite concessions to Yugoslavia, it could be argued that the recognition of a Macedonian language and nationality served a Bulgarian national perspective. The institutionalisation and development of the Macedonian language could evoke allegations of its Bulgarian character, because its proximity to the Bulgarian language would become apparent. Such allegations would serve the national arguments of Bulgarian communists, such as Poptomov, about the cultural and national proximity of Bulgarians and Macedonians, instead of the proximity of the latter to the Serbians, which Titoists claimed. This theoretical framework was consistent with the way in which the leadership of the BCP imagined Macedonians.

The leadership of the BCP imagined Macedonians as being of Bulgarian origin.[157] There is evidence that during the Second World War and the early post-war years, the prominent figures of the BCP did not imagine Macedonians as a separate nation. In a letter from Dimitrov to Tito dated June 1st 1942, Macedonians were not mentioned among

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[153] King (1973): 63.

[154] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 298 (July 1947): 7–9, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 21 (April 1948): 11.

[155] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 21 (April 1948): 10.

[156] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 247 (July 1948): 98 ff. Stoichev, head of the local Party committee in Gorna Dzhumaya (Blagoevgrad) by 1948, stated that whilst Chankov and Chervenkov were exerting pressure for the dissemination of the Macedonian language in the Pirin district, Kostov proclaimed that the local population had to be taught in its Bulgarian mother-tongue, in Michev (1994): 444–445.

[157] There is much evidence of it: BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 191 (October 1944): 24; BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 7 (August 1946): 1; BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 916 (April 1948): 1; BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 918 (April 1948): 11.

the Balkan peoples.[158] In April 1944, Dimitrov maintained that Macedonians were a populace ('naselenie'), 'an ethnic conglomerate made up of Bulgarians, Macedonians, Slavs, Greeks, Serbs'. Despite his doubts about the existence of a Macedonian consciousness, he accepted that Macedonia could achieve its freedom and statehood, despite her ethnographic conglomeration.[159]

After the uprising of 9 September and as early as October 1944, Poptomov theorised at a public meeting in the Pirin area that the Macedonian people had originated from the Bulgarian nation, but had developed a Macedonian identity due to their long oppression and the Great-Bulgarian policy which gambled away the national ideals of Bulgaria. He supposed that if the San-Stefano Treaty had not been retracted and Macedonia had been included in Bulgaria, no Macedonian question would exist.[160] And later, in May 1945, he pointed out that Macedonian revolutionaries had possessed a Bulgarian national consciousness since Ilinden, but they fought for the self-determination of Macedonia, because demands for incorporation of Macedonia into Bulgaria were not at the right time.[161] It was not only Poptomov but also Party members from the Pirin area who stressed that Bulgarians and the Pirin population were identical, highlighting the proximity of their languages and cultures and introducing the term 'Bulgarian Macedonian'.[162]

The discourse which the BCP developed concerning the Macedonian question involved a problematic and contradictory recognition of a Macedonian minority within the Bulgarian state. Although the BCP undoubtedly recognised the People's Republic of Macedonia as the successful end of the struggle of the Macedonian nation towards independence, and as the basis for the future unification of the whole Macedonian nation (including Bulgarian and Greek Macedonia), it essentially did not imagine Macedonians of the Pirin area as separate from the Bulgarian narod. Imagining Macedonians as part of the Bulgarian nation resulted from decades of discourse couched in a national

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[158] Banac (2003): 220.
[159] Banac (2003): 315.
[160] The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1132–1134.
[161] The BCP, the Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1210–1211. Not only politicians but also historians held the same view, Mitev (1948): 305–306.
[162] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 21 (April 1948): 21, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 546 (September 1948): 8–9 (according to the Macedonian cultural-educational association), and Michev (1994): 57, 60–61.

language.[163] Indeed, Bulgarians had grown up for generations with the official national aspiration of the Bulgarian state to incorporate Macedonia (Virhovism, the Balkan Wars, the First World War, revisionism, the Second World War). School textbooks, historiography, and public rhetoric had argued that Macedonia was an inseparable part of Bulgaria and claimed that the struggle of a Macedonian nation was part of the tactics of the Bulgarian state to annexe Macedonia.

In this chapter, we have explored the national discourse of the BCP on the international level. As we have seen, the Bulgarian communists operated within certain limits designated by the socialist bloc. In this context, drawing on a nationalist, kinship discourse, integration of Bulgaria into the socialist bloc was presented as natural; it was argued, by and large, that the Slav character of Bulgaria affiliated her with the socialist bloc, that is the Slav 'in-group', prioritised Slav unity, dictated the association with the USSR, and, most importantly, vindicated assistance from and interference of the big Slav brother in domestic affairs. Moreover, a modified anti-imperialist theory prescribed Bulgaria's membership of the Comintern, which, it was claimed, would ensure Bulgaria's national sovereignty and integrity. In parallel with legitimising Bulgaria's belonging to the socialist bloc, the Bulgarian communists engaged in defining the 'national self', contrasting it with the imperialist, warmonger, capitalist, and reactionary 'other'; thus they dichotomised the world into friendly and enemy nations. Such a world division, in its turn, vindicated the foreign policy of the BCP and incriminated any opposition to it.

National questions are undoubtedly framed by national discourses. With regard to the concurrent national questions the Bulgarian communists deployed a fluid, malleable and inevitably contradictory discourse, as a result of conflating Leninist principles and nationalistic issues. Despite Bulgarian claims over territory belonging to an enemy nation, having already positioned itself into the competent capitalist 'out-group', there was controversy with an ostensibly friendly socialist nation. As many cases in the aftermath of war indicate, it appeared

[163] Both allies of the communists and opposition parties imagined Macedonians as Bulgarians, in Neshovich (1986): 146 and 151. Even the Federation of Anarchist-Communists of Bulgaria considered the Macedonian question artificial and it opposed any concession of Bulgarian territory, BCP Records Fund 272, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 40 (December 1946): 1.

that, together with the flowering of nations in the socialist era according to the Stalinist dictum, flowering of national debates among socialist states was also to occur. As we have seen, the Bulgarian communist approach to the national question involved nationalist arguments about territory, history, culture, and language; attempts to envisage and to pursue Bulgaria's national interests and ideals; and above all imagining of the nation. Despite conditions that were relatively unfavourable to Bulgarian nationalism, the Bulgarian communists did in fact articulate a distinct and extensive national discourse. In doing so, the Bulgarian communists determined the nation as socialist and, at the same time, themselves as patriots.

After examining the nationalist discourse of the BCP in relation to the domestic and the international domain, another issue should be taken into consideration: how the BCP flagged nationhood. As the mainstream of the coalition of the Fatherland Front, which ruled Bulgaria, it had appropriated all the necessary means to promote a common sense for Bulgarian citizens.

CHAPTER FOUR

FLAGGING NATIONHOOD: BULGARIAN COMMUNIST (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF THE NATIONAL PAST

When the Bulgarian communists seized power and the transition to socialism began, the (re)construction of history became a significant concern for the new regime. Verdery argues that the point is not how history 'really happened' in a given society or how it has been politically 'distorted', but how visions of the past are made; in other words, how history is produced.[1] Foucault, rather than thinking of history as a fixed entity, thought of multiple, overlapping and contesting histories. Hence, historical events or historical periods might be seen as ongoing inventions that have been subjected to revisions and reconstructions through each subsequent era; it is, therefore, political considerations of the present that define the past and produce its narration. Here we shall use the term '(re)construction of the national past',[2] because the narration promoted by the communist regime relied on the already existent narration of Bulgaria's national past, which, as we shall see, they elaborated and developed using Marxist categories and schemas.

The past is of central and crucial significance to nationalism, while its (re)construction on a national basis might be seen as a task mainly undertaken by history-writing. Indeed, as Smith has underlined, historians play a central role in the 'delineation of the nation'[3] and figure prominently among the creators and devotees of nationalism. Historiography is central to nationalism, because nationalism is profoundly 'historicist', as Smith argues. The reason for this is that nationalism "sees the world as a product of the interplay of various communities, each possessing a unique character and history".[4]

The narration of the past could be seen as a product of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction, since, as many theorists of nationalism have argued, history-writing involves elements of myth-making,

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[1] Verdery (1991): 217.

[2] I use the prefix *re* in a Foucaultian manner, as there are a lot of layers of construction, while any construction of the past is ever-changing.

[3] Smith A. (1999): 10.

[4] Smith A. (1999): 39.

selectivity and invention to a considerable degree. To begin with, even though ethno-symbolists rest on 'ethnic heritages', they have underscored the role of myth in establishing and determining the foundations of a nation as well as in 'rediscoveries' and 'reinterpretations' of the 'popular living past'. Renan has indicated that remembering and forgetting have been of equal significance: "forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation".[5] Forgetting is necessary both for the creation of a nation and for its perpetuation. However, historians are not only involved in the creation of 'collective amnesia', but also creatively remember ideologically convenient facts about the past, while overlooking what is discomfiting.[6] Instrumentalists, such as Hobsbawm, have added one more constitutive element in the narration of the national past: invention. 'Invented traditions' are highly relevant to nations and national histories, which rest on innovative exercises in social engineering.

Social engineering, such as the (re)construction of the past and nationalist narrative strategy, is a fundamental concern of elites. As Smith states, "history serves the interests of elites who use selected aspects of the past to manipulate mass emotions".[7] In the case of post-war Bulgaria, the BCP showed a great interest in historical textbooks, because over a million students studied them, and teachers, parents and workers learnt history from them.[8] Also, as a community is identified in national terms, political elites and the state are interested in orchestrating and controlling national myth-making and narration, since they create an intellectual and cognitive monopoly for ordering the world and defining worldviews. Hence, they can mobilise people, exclude others, screen out certain memories, and reinforce the hierarchy of status and values. The Bulgarian communist regime was no exception to this rule. The Bulgarian national narration will be viewed in terms of three dimensions of time: the first is related to the time of the historical events and actors; the second involves the time of the particular version of the national narration that the BCP engaged with; the third concerns the time in which the present research is written.

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[5] Renan (1999): 11.
[6] Billig (1995): 38.
[7] Smith A. (1997): 37.
[8] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745: 84 and 164.

4.1 *(Re)construction of the Past: Institutional Framework*

The Bulgarian communists masterminded the (re)construction of the past via history-writing, state-driven education, and the single and obligatory history textbook. Within this political project, the BCP put all its efforts into controlling publications and institutions related to history-writing. First of all, the Bulgarian Academy's membership was appointed by the BCP, its presidency was undertaken by Todor Pavlov, a Marxist philosopher, and it was transformed into an academy of a Soviet type exemplified by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.[9] At the same time, the cleansing of 'fascist and bourgeois' professors had been completed in universities. In addition, the BCP set up the publishing house 'Partizdat' ('Party Publications'), controlled all the official editions of history after 1944 and progressively administered them. The nationalisation of the press and of publishing houses put the most crucial means of cultural production into Party hands. The official historical journal 'Istroricheski Pregled' ('Historical Review')[10] replaced all others of the same field and disseminated politically correct tendencies, scientific methodology and a communist interpretation of the past. Articles on historical subjects, published in the official Party newspaper, 'Rabotnichesko Delo', depict the past as the BCP publicly defined it. Last but not least, a conference of all prominent Bulgarian historians was held by the Committee of Science, Art, and Culture, and supervised by Chervenkov, in order to designate the framework for rewriting history from a materialist and Marxist viewpoint. Academics and historians engaged in the rewriting of history would create the so-called 'historical front', a strongly centralised and strictly controlled institution.

The 'Conference of the Workers of the Historical Front' supervised and regulated by Chervenkov was the BCP's vital attempt to integrate professors, academicians, and authors, namely the constituents of any historical institution of the modern time. As the composition of the 'Bulgarian Historical Front' shows and Chervenkov himself recognised,[11] it incorporated skilled cadres of old politically non-affiliated specialists as well as specialists who had been integrated into the BCP despite

[9] Pundeff (1969): 381.

[10] Istoricheski Pregled had a run of over 10,000 copies in 1948, in Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 8.

[11] 'Fifth Congress…' (1949): 291.

their old bourgeois ideological background.[12] Up until 1948, the BCP allowed non-communist scholars to write history, while non-members of the BCP participated in historical debates and gave lectures.[13] However, all 'workers of the historical front' were, of course, loyal to the BCP. Verdery attributes a military sense to the 'historical front' and considers it crucial in shaping both the national and materialistic facets of the regime's ideology.[14] The institution of a 'historical front' allowed the BCP to bring the production of historiography more and more tightly under the control of the state and, consequently, of the Party.

With regard to the setting and the conditions of history-writing, the Soviet experience and guidance in writing history and historical pedagogy was seriously considered.[15] The Soviet model was ill defined, however, since it was affected by the vagaries of flux, ongoing refinements of Party lines, and purges, all of which marked Soviet politics of the late 1930s and induced the unrestrainable re-editing of textbooks.[16] Limited access to Soviet materials caused further difficulties.[17] As well as socioeconomic formations,[18] the Soviet patriotism of the 1930s exerted a strong influence on history-writing under the Bulgarian communist regime. The Soviet patriotism and Russocentrism of the 1930s and the Patriotic War favoured a factological narration on a national basis, demanding a nationalistic interpretation and a reverence for the national past, a simplified linear historical trajectory (from Kievan origins to Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union), and, in line with the cult of personality, a focus, if not an emphasis, on individuals as national figures. Attention to Marxian schemas and detailed

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[12] Only 19 out of 29 historian-participants in the 'Conference of the Workers of the Historical Front', held in 1948, were BCP members, BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745 (1948). Nevertheless, it should be noted that many of the 'workers of the historical front' joined the BCP after 9 September 1944.

[13] Pundeff (1961): 683.

[14] Verdery (1991): 220.

[15] Popov (1964): 65–67. For instance, the Bulgarian committee, which was in charge of writing historical schoolbooks, took advice from the Soviet one, in BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 10 (1946): 159.

[16] Brandenberger (2002): 63–76; Mazour (1958): 197 ff and 211 ff; Mazour (1971): 363; and Ferro (1984): 118–119.

[17] Popov (1964): 67 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 10 (1946): 159.

[18] Pokrovsky's model, which introduced and elaborated history-writing in accordance with the social-economic formations in the post-revolutionary years, was abandoned in the mid 1930s as 'abstract and schematic' and was, then, blamed for the vulgarisation of history, in Yaresh (1962a): 35–77. In 1945–1946, a return to this model, in Mazour (1971): 360–361 and Yaresh (1962b): 77–105, explains the interest of the Bulgarian historical front in outlining the periodisation of Bulgarian history.

discussions of communism were apparently downgraded. During the war, efforts to inculcate an articulate patriotic identity were intensified; Russocentric imagery based on a systematic use of historical analogies was repeatedly invoked; Soviet patriotic propaganda was at its apogee; in this context, proletarian internationalism and class struggle were eclipsed.[19] Furthermore, after 1946, a more orthodox Soviet ideology seemed to re-emerge; the Russian people were extolled as the chosen people of a manifest destiny by the systematic use of pre-revolutionary and medieval historical analogies; Russian scientists were presented as the greatest innovators; Soviet historiography stressed national characteristics and tended to eliminate any foreign influence over the evolution of the Russian nation, in particular, and the peoples comprising the Soviet Union, in general.[20]

As well as the Soviet model of history-writing, the 'workers of the historical front' had to take account of Dimitrov's appeal at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, held in 1935.[21] He had recommended to communist leaders a rewriting of history that emphasised reverence for the national past, appropriation of the glorious pages of a past already defined in national terms, strong criticism of national nihilism, and recognition of the working masses as the guardians of national honour, thus countering the falsifications of bourgeois history. Undoubtedly, the Soviet model of history-writing and Dimitrov's recommendations on reshaping history had an impact on all communist regimes.

For the government of the Fatherland Front and its dominant political component, the BCP, education was a crucial issue. A central state-driven educational system was conducive to promoting both nationalism and communism. Gellner mainly associates nationalism with the central educational system, as a state-driven educational system requires and produces a homogeneous culture and a standard language, both vital to the construction of a national identity.[22] He concluded that in modern times:

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[19] Brandenberger (2002): 133–143. The task of Soviet pedagogy was to bring up schoolchildren with the sense of being the descendants of warriors who had defended their motherland from invaders, ibid., p. 134.

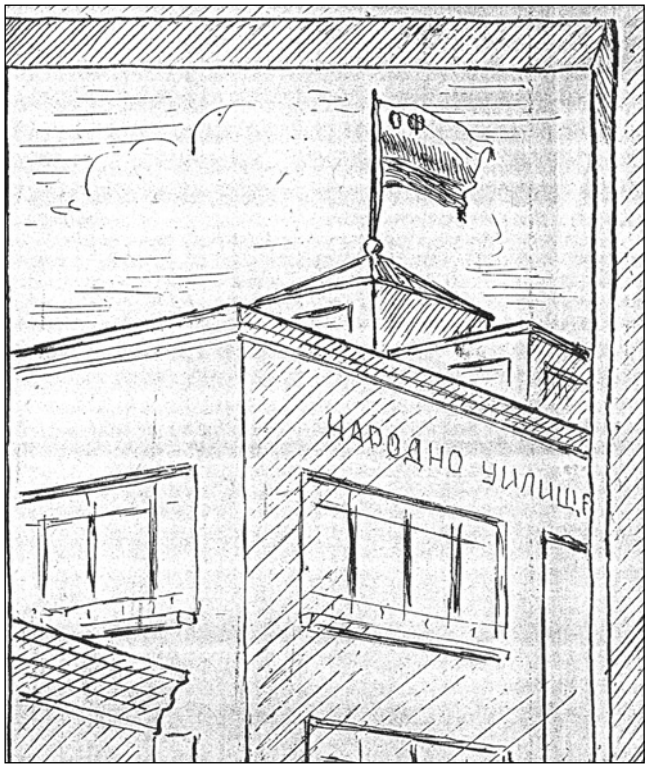
[20] Brandenberger (2002): 197–213 and Mazour (1958): 210–219.

[21] Dimitrov, *The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism (Report before the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, delivered on 02 August 1935)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. II)*: 70–73.*

[22] Gellner (1983): 35–39.

> …a well-centralised state…presides over…and is identified with, one kind of culture…which…is dependent for its perpetuation on a centralised educational system supervised by and often actually run by the state in question, which monopolises legitimate culture and…violence.[23]

In the case of the Bulgarian communist regime, a centralised state monopolised the educational system and, thus, any kind of identity, including the national one. The Bulgarian communist state-driven educational system had asserted that it realised the doctrine 'national in form and socialist in content'.



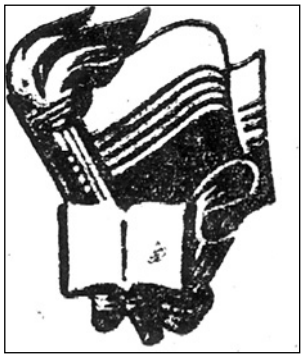
Flying the flag at the top of a school—flagging nationhood (significantly, the national flag has the initials of the Fatherland Front imprinted on it). Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 242: 199.

[23] Gellner (1983): 140. See, also, Hroch (1985) on the importance of education for nationalism.

As the example of the educational system of the Third French Republic had shown, free, compulsory and state-driven mass schooling[24] could mould the consciousness of future citizens and project current ideas into the past. Jules Ferry, Minister of Education and Prime Minister of the Third French Republic, argued that:

> …when the whole French youth has developed, grown up under this triple aegis of free, compulsory, secular education, we shall have nothing more to fear from returns to the past.[25]

Preventing a return to the past was also of major importance to the BCP. Thus, free, compulsory and state-driven mass schooling helped to legitimise the regime and in the process certify a single, united conception of the national community. A conflation of national and communist ideas was projected onto the central task of schools: to create future citizens influenced by the progressive ideas of the Fatherland Front who would then be conscious builders and defenders of their fatherland.[26] School pupils would be future party members and cadres, having been instilled with the Party's sense of the Bulgarian national idea. According to Dramaliev,[27] a scientific learning of national history, that is, a Marxist-Leninist one in the communist jargon, would evoke genuine patriotic emotions.



The symbol of Septemvrists with the waving Bulgarian flag and no communist sign on it.

The Fatherland Front also exploited the opportunities that mass schooling offered in order to inspire the youth with the spirit of the new regime, namely a Marxist reconciliation with nationalism. Schools were flagging nationhood; portraits of Bulgarian national revival figures were displayed on classroom walls;[28] the national anthem opened every musical

[24] For the free, compulsory and state-driven character of the Bulgarian educational system of the early post-war years, see Atanasov (1970): 10–12.

[25] Cited in Mayeur and Rebérioux (1984): 85. For the educational reforms of Jules Ferry, see, also, Randell (1986): 49–50.

[26] Dramaliev (1945b): 12.

[27] Dramaliev (1945b): 23. Similar tasks were undertaken by the Soviet communists: "thirty million school children need to be brought up in the spirit of boundless love for the motherland and devotion to the party of Lenin and Stalin", as published in Pravda, cited in Brandenberger (2002).

[28] Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 2, Archival Unit 1 (1945): 295.

interlude in school celebrations;[29] national ideology, meanings, and symbols were disseminated through mass schooling, especially on commemorative days and national anniversaries.[30] At the same time, schools became loci of communist propaganda and education and teaching staff became preachers of Fatherland Front politics. For instance, an hour of 'anti-fascist education', which was replaced by 'democratic education' in February 1946, was institutionalised.[31] During some of these hours, the teachers deemed most appropriate for the occasion spoke to pupils about the national necessity to abolish the monarchy, the national achievements of the Fatherland Front, and the national significance of the Party's victory in the coming elections.[32] Teaching staff explained the new Constitution in classes[33] and spoke widely about the national significance of the government and the anti-Bulgarian role of the opposition. They were also called upon to take part in the Two Years Plan and other governmental initiatives so that pupils, their parents, and the entire society would emulate their example.[34] The Bulgarian communist regime propagated its ideology towards youth. When criticised by the opposition, the Party's leadership replied that the ideology promoted in schools was not that of the BCP, but of the Fatherland Front, the only genuine patriotic force in Bulgaria. The Party's leadership also based the function of the pupil organisation 'Septemvrists' and the youth organisation 'EMOS', both consisting of school children, on national reasons.[35]

The BCP controlled the main propagandist tool in schools: textbooks. Historical textbooks of political and military education were

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[29] Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 2, Archival Unit 1 (1945): 332, and Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 2, Archival Unit 3 (1945): 120, 122, 140 ff.

[30] See, for instance, the day of National Revival's men, the centenary of Aprilov's death, the celebration of Vazov's memory, the day of Cyril and Methodius in Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 4 (1947): 20, 74,148 and in Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 6 (1947): 93 respectively.

[31] Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 3, Archival Unit 1 (1946): 196. Some of the issues of the agenda of that day were as follows: the Two Years Plan, the building of the People's Republic, imperialism, Slav unity, the meaning of nation, the national policy of the Fatherland Front, and national ideals of Bulgaria, in Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 6 (1947): 198.

[32] Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 3, Archival Unit 1 (1946): 44 and 51.

[33] Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 7 (1947): 115.

[34] Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 6 (1947): 105 and 164.

[35] Dramaliev (1945a): 8–10.

published by the state-driven 'Narodna Prosveta' ('National-People's Education'), established by the Ministry of Education at the beginning of 1945. Only a few school textbooks were published during the period between 1944 and 1949. Although the BCP and the Fatherland Front were concerned with education and mass schooling,[36] there was a lack of raw materials, the war and post-war situation hampered the publication of school textbooks, and the development of a new school-teaching programme, as well as fundamental changes in school education, was time-consuming.[37] At the same time, teachers were underqualified, books were not available, and students were better able to understand patriotic imagery, events and heroes than more sophisticated Marxist-Leninist concepts. Any textbook influenced by 'fascist ideology and Great-Bulgarian chauvinism' was banned, while supposed fascist elements were cleansed from schools and all other educational institutions.[38] Historical textbooks of political education and military education reveal the BCP's tendencies towards selectivity, invention, and myth-making with respect to the 'national past'.

Textbooks reproduced and advanced the reconstruction of the past as the BCP engineered it. Since textbooks comprise the pupils' knowable universe, they tend to believe that a textbook tells the unquestionable truth. Textbooks are, indeed, a convenient means of constantly flagging the nation, tracing its path and showing its direction. In other words, they diffuse the 'truth' of the nation. In the event that there is just one single textbook for a discipline, as in post-war Bulgaria with regard to history, its truth becomes totally unique. The single and obligatory history textbook can inculcate the national idea as it is officially constructed by a regime. Jules Ferry indicated the significance of the obligatory textbook in mass schooling stressing that 'he who is the master of the book is master of education'.[39] In the Soviet Union, a commission chaired by Zhdanov, consisting of establishment historians, and supervised by Stalin himself, assigned the task of publishing a standardised, paradigmatic textbook on elementary Soviet history in 1936. The final text, namely Shestakov's "Short Course on the History of the USSR" edited by Zhdanov, broke with Pokrovsky's

[36] Chervenkov emphasized the gravity of history and schooling in a meeting of the Committee in charge of writing historical textbooks, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 10 (1946): 159.
[37] Dramaliev (1945a): 9.
[38] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 10 (1945): 91–92.
[39] Cited in Sowerwine (2001): 36.

'sociological' trends and conflated Russocentric topics, pre-revolutionary heroes and socialist motifs. This official, state-driven document of Soviet historical pedagogy was reprinted and taught until 1955.[40] The constant, but unnoticed, flagging of nationhood in history textbooks plants subtle daily reminders of nationhood in the susceptible minds of pupils. The reiteration of their national place in a national world is so familiar and continual, that they unconsciously become national thinking adults. Thus, if a 'nation's existence' is a 'daily plebiscite', as Renan[41] expressed it, pupils learn to cast their daily, positive ballot from a very young age.

With regard to the authors of the textbooks on the national history of Bulgaria, 'only two were not party members'.[42] Burmov, Lambrev, Hristov, Kosev, Mitev and Topalov were Marxists;[43] nevertheless, all of them apart Mitev and Lambrev joined the BCP after 9 September.[44] Bozhikov participated in the writing of the textbooks published in 1946, 1949 and 1951[4], while Burmov is one of the authors of the textbooks issued in 1946, 1950[5] and 1951[4].

Through history-writing and school textbooks the communist regime sought to colonise the national past for legitimacy purposes. Firstly, the BCP could legitimise its regime if it described it as an evolution of the version of the national history, already disseminated through the masses, rather than if it completely deconstructed national myth-making and substituted it with another version. Indeed, national historiography had been prevalent in Bulgaria since the early post-war years, as history-writing and education were controlled by governments who spoke the national dialect and a communist approach to the national question was clandestine. Views of the so-called 'reactionary fascist historiography' as well as influences of the so-called 'bourgeois

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[40] Brandenberger (2002): 251–260.

[41] Renan (1990): 19.

[42] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 10 (1946): 159.

[43] The most important textbook was the one of Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946). There are editions up to 1948; most probably, it was substituted by the textbook written by the team of Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]). There is one more textbook for the state schools written by Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]) and a textbook for the military academies written by Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949). Major Mitev (1947) wrote a book comprised of lectures on modern Bulgarian history for the military school.

[44] Analytically, Burmov, Hristov, Kosev joined the BCP in 1944, Lambrev in 1919 and Mitev in 1941; Bozhikov was most probably a member of the BCP. The rest of the authors certainly had a kind of professional relationship with the Ministry of Education.

historiography' on the writings of Marxist authors were still present to a considerable degree in the history-writing of the new regime, as Burmov noted.[45] Moreover, communist parties had approached the past in national terms since the inter-war years, as they sought to win over the masses and enter alliances. The culmination of this approach was Dimitrov's appeal at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern for re-writing history in the sense that communist parties would in various ways appropriate the glorious pages of a past already defined in national terms.

In this context, the BCP preferred (re)construction of the national past to its deconstruction. For this reason, up-to-date political events, such as the people's courts and the Titoist treason, are included[46] in textbooks, despite this being an unusual phenomenon for historical textbooks and historiography. Contemporary history was considered crucial in imbuing the Bulgarian youth with the spirit of socialism and Slav unity in order that Bulgarian patriotism be reinforced.[47] In this sense, history was presented as a linear drift towards the socialist era, when Bulgarian history reaches its peak. Thus, the historical narration justified the new path of the Fatherland Front and socialism.[48] In this way, to rephrase De Certeau, the time and the place of the production of the text is transformed into a place produced by the text.[49]

Secondly, as the BCP was concerned with sustaining its power, it needed a discourse about unity and continuity; the most effective discourse underpinning unity and continuity at that time was nationalism. Through historiography the BCP could present its own tasks as national and itself as the representative and defender not only of working class interests but those of the entire nation. For this reason, the presumption 'if he was alive' referring to Blagoev, Botev, Paisii, Vazov and all national figures, was accompanied by the certainty that

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[45] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743, 744, 745 (1948): *passim*. Mitev (1948): 316, a Marxist historian, recommended that historians of the past regime criticise themselves and espouse materialism.

[46] Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 100–110.

[47] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745 (1948): 165.

[48] "Bulgaria must follow the path of the narod's (nation-people) welfare, of all-Slav brotherhood and unity, which is a path, determined by our [Bulgarian] history, by our [Bulgarian] historical development. Every deviation from this path leads to national calamity. Our [Bulgarian] youth, which finishes its secondary education as well as the whole Bulgarian youth, must track this path…", in Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 434.

[49] De Certaeu (1988): 90.

he would be an adherent of the Fatherland Front.[50] A very striking example of this presumption is the following excerpt from Pavlov on Botev:

> …if Botev was alive, he would join us [both the BCP and the Fatherland Front] and participate in the national liberation movement against the Hitlerite-German yoke and against its agents in our country…he would welcome the Red Army…he would send greetings to Stalin.…[51]

It was also argued that the communist regime realised unfulfilled aims of the Bulgarian Renaissance and national liberation movement.[52]

Last but not least, Bulgarian historiography had an overwhelmingly instrumental perspective, having been explicitly outlined at the Fifth Congress of the BCP in December 1948[53] and reflected in the new law of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAN).[54] Theories and views opposed to Marxism–Leninism were to be confronted; 'nationalism'(as the BCP used this term in opposition to patriotism), 'Great-Bulgarian chauvinism', any remnants of fascist ideology, 'anarchism', and 'Trotskyism' were to be discredited. 'Falsifications' of Bulgarian history made by bourgeois historians from antiquity to the present day, were to be replaced by a 'scientific approach', as the BCP believed that it wrote 'objective history'.

(Re)construction of the past with national criteria centrally and firmly directed by the Bulgarian communists resulted in an increased concentration of national values and symbols. A monolithic Party-State was producing a monolithic nation. Such an approach to the past perfectly served the totalitarian project embarked on by the BCP. In the light of all the above political considerations, and to achieve their ends, Bulgarian communists married Marxist schemas with a nationalist approach to the past.

4.2 *A Peculiar Marxist Version of History-Writing*

This section identifies and outlines a peculiar Marxist version of history-writing with considerable national elements or, to express it more clearly, a nationalist version of history-writing which respects

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[50] Bogdanova (1992): 63–64.
[51] Pavlov (1946): 12–13.
[52] See the relevant chapters in all historical textbooks.
[53] BCP Records Fund 223, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 1, vol. IV (1948): 947–968.
[54] Pundeff (1969): 381.

some, and pays lip service to other, Marxian axioms. The historical apparatus of the BCP responded to the challenges of the new version of nationalism that the BCP promoted. Under these circumstances, however, it had to confront a set of practical but above all theoretical problems.

To begin with practical difficulties, the BCP did not have enough cadres capable of producing a narration of the past different to the national one, since communist theorists were few in number before 9 September. At the significant 'Conference of the Workers of the Historical Front' on the establishment and tasks of the science of history in Bulgaria,[55] that is, the establishment of materialism in historiography, supervised by Chervenkov, 19 out of 29 historian-participants were members of the BCP. A considerable portion of historian-party-members joined it after 9 September. Some of those who took part in that conference would be accused of Great-Bulgarian chauvinism (e.g. Ormandzhiev).[56] In the general notes of the conference, most probably written by Chervenkov, serious flaws of a Marxist nature committed by the historian-participants were highlighted. These were as follows: lack of emphasis on periodisation; little attention paid to modern history (75% of the discussion involved ancient and medieval history); in many historical questions, the interests and approaches of historian-participants recalled the old bourgeois methodology; sterile declarations of historical materialism without an essential use of it; and the underplaying of the role of the working class in Bulgaria's social and political development.[57]

In order to confront theoretical problems, the so-called 'workers of the historical front' opted for a fusion of social-economic formations with a periodisation of Bulgaria's past drawn on national lines.[58] Bulgarian communist intellectuals meticulously discussed the periodisation

[55] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745 (1948). The conference was held in 1948. The tasks of the Conference were the eradication of falsifications made by bourgeois historiography and the writing of a reliable scientific textbook on Bulgarian history.

[56] Bulgaria was no exception in allowing representatives of the old regime, radical nationalists or even fascists to pursue a career in the new regime; Polish communists did the same, i.e. Piaceski, a prominent fascist, served in a high ranking position of the communist regime, in Behrends (2009): 450.

[57] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745 (1948): 157–166.

[58] For the coexistence of social-economic formations with national historical narration in Bulgarian historiography, see BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 359 (1949): 5–6, concerning the resolution of the Central Committee of the BCP on an edition of a popularised Bulgarian history.

of Bulgarian history in order to outline the context within which the Bulgarian narod had evolved. Not accidentally, feudalism begins with the establishment of the first Bulgarian state (that is, in 681), while capitalism coincides with the times of Bulgaria's national revival and national liberation (that is, from 1878 until 1944, when the socialist era emerges).[59] Granting that the Ottoman Balkans were a *mutatis mutandis* unified, an inseparable region in social-economic terms, how was it that the emergence of capitalism in each Balkan nation occurred at different times? As an old Marxist, Karakolov, expressed it, every narod has its own history and its own periodisation.[60] Thus, Marxist social-economic formations within a peculiar national context delineated a schema of linear historical process, which significantly assisted and developed a construction of the past on a national basis. Such theoretical aspects divide the Marxist holistic concept of the modes of production into national parts and mutate the mode of production from a fundamental analytical tool into a framework of national evolution.

The merging of national and Marxist categories resulted in some confusion between Marxian and national periodisations. On the one hand, historical narration respected the Marxian social-economic formations based on the modes of production; on the other hand, it articulated the establishment and collapse of the three Bulgarian states as well as the foreign yokes (Byzantine and Ottoman) over the Bulgarians. Such historical continuity of the Bulgarian people and Bulgarian identity since primordial times contradicts the Stalinist doctrine that the nation emerged in the capitalist era,[61] since it depicts social-economic formations, institutions and classes of the 'pre-nationalist' era in national terms, e.g. the Turkish feudal system, Turkish feudal exploitation, the Turkish (instead of Ottoman) Empire, the Turkish yoke and the Turkish ruling class. The ensuing confusion is revealed in the following excerpt cited in the schoolbook of 1951[4]: "under the denationalising pursuits of the Greek Patriarchate…".[62] Insofar as

[59] Pundeff (1961): 684. See also the periodisation that Lambrev and Karakolov proposed in Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 79 and Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745 (1948): 65 respectively as well as that of Mitev, in Mitev (1947): 9–12.

[60] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745 (1948): 68.

[61] "Nation is a historical category belonging to the epoch of rising capitalism", in Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question (1913)*, in Bruce (1973): 65.

[62] Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 94.

it refers to the Ottoman era, that is, a time before the emergence of nations, the question arises as to how a non-nation could be denationalised by a nationalised religious institution. The above-mentioned contradiction is due to the attempt of the authors of the historical textbook to attribute a national character to the Marxist category of social-economic formations, which were formulated on the premise that there were no nations before capitalism. The device that that textbook employed was a marriage of Marxist categories with a national narration of the past.

To respect the Stalinist doctrine that the nation emerged in the capitalist era the 'workers of the historical front' deployed a schema of evolution from tribe to 'narod' and then to nation, whereas a Bulgarian community/tribe had existed since primordial times. It seems that only the process of evolution from 'narod' to nation takes place under capitalism.[63] There is an interesting analogy with the ethnosymbolist evolutionary schema that Smith proposes: from ethnic category to ethnic community and then to nation.[64] The Smithian ethnic category, that is, a cultural unit whose members are bound by a sense of kinship, could be considered as analogous with the notion of tribe as determined by the BCP. The Smithian ethnic community, that is, a named human population with ancestral myths, historical memories, and common cultural traits associated with a homeland, is compatible with narod. Significantly, the Bulgarian narod emerged after settling to the south of the Danube and being associated with the 'Bulgarian lands'. The Smithian nation and the BCP nation are political phenomena of the modern era which originated in ethnic community and narod respectively. Thus, the Stalinist doctrine that the bourgeoisie introduced the national idea[65] is reconciled with the eternality of the Bulgarian consciousness in the following schema: the Bulgarian narod which had existed since primordial times was transformed into the Bulgarian nation through certain social and economic changes in the Ottoman Empire.[66] This schema generated inconsistencies, a striking one of which is as follows: despite his declared position that the Bulgarian nation is a product of early capitalism (due to the economic

[63] Pavlov (1940): 107–126, BCP Records Fund 324, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 163 (November 1945–July 1946): 22, and Stoyanov (1949): 16–25. Mitev (1947): 35 specifies the time when the Bulgarian narod was transformed into a nation: 1850–1860.

[64] Smith A. (1999): 105.

[65] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 12.

[66] Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 93.

and cultural activities of the merchant and manufacturing classes, the development of craft industry, and the formulation of the new Bulgarian language, that is, 'novobilgarski'), Mitev identified national yokes (Greek and Turkish) at the time of the Bulgarian Renaissance and thought that peasants had already acquired national consciousness during the national-liberation movement. The problematic points in his account are, first, the existence of national yokes before the emergence of nations, and, second, the absence of socioeconomic reasons to explain how the peasantry learnt nationalism, given that the bourgeoisie learnt it in the market.[67]

On another level, the fusion of Marxian key actors with a nationalist approach to the past had some repercussions for the interpretation of the past: classes increasingly acquired a national role becoming progressive or reactionary-retrograde depending on their role in the national evolution. This resulted in the ascription of a patriotic or treacherous character to social classes, whereas in Marxian analysis classes have certain international dimensions and play a certain, progressive or reactionary, role in terms of social evolution. For instance, the peasants, craftsmen and intellectuals were represented as an active part of the national revolutionary movement of the 19th century which had opted for armed revolution.[68] This concept of the progressive character of the peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie was extremely helpful to the BCP in the early post-war years, when peasants, intellectuals and small entrepreneurs were considered allies of the working class in its social and national struggle. With regard to the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, Bulgarian Marxist authors accorded it a conservative attitude towards the national question in the 19th century, since, they argued,[69] it had supported Turkish-Bulgarian dualism, a suitable solution given its class interests, rather than an independent liberated state. The amalgamation of the big bourgeoisie with the 'chorbadzhis' (landowners) allowed for the political de-legitimisation of the bourgeois class, since chorbadzhis were identified with treacherous villains in the national narrative. In this way they refrained from the Stalinist doctrine that the big bourgeoisie advanced nationalism. Examples of

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[67] Mitev (1948): 300–302 (excerpt from Stalin's writings ibid., p. 301). Natan and Chervenkov were of the same view, in Daskalov, (2004): 130.

[68] See, for instance, Natan (1946) and (1949[4]) and Pavlov (1946): 6–9, who records that there was no proletariat to undertake the hegemonic role in the national liberation movement.

[69] Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 106–107.

'anti-national' classes were chorbadzhis and wholesale merchants, who preferred diplomacy to revolution[70] and negotiated the future of the nation with its subjugator granting them some of the national interests and rights, and the 'boyari' (medieval landowners) whose interest in maintaining their power led them to unite with and assist the Turks. Consequently, according to official historiography, the real patriotic force, the people—unarmed and impoverished—did not effectively resist the Ottoman Turks.[71]

Merging Marxist and nationalist idioms meant that actors were embedded in the history of the nation whether or not they had any conception of the Bulgarian nation. This type of historiography is nationalist, as it draws non-national actors and events into the national narrative. For instance, a religious battle or an institution can be narrated as a national one. The prioritised agents of the BCP's history-writing apparatus were people, land, language, and religion paying lip service to the Marxian conceptualisation of social agents. To begin with, a new subject, that of the entire people (narod), was constructed through history-writing. This aspect of Bulgarian communist history-writing faded out class struggle and integrated the BCP's separate history and national history into a whole. Everything alien to the BCP's ideology was considered not really of 'the people'. The most prominent example of this concerned the approach to Great-Bulgarian chauvinism, which constituted a marginal phenomenon until German imperialist interests and a German dynasty imposed it on Bulgaria. Such a slippage from the classification of class to that of narod was conducive to a slippage from terms implying exploitation, a Marxian fundamental principle of social-economic and political analysis, to those implying domination of the Bulgarian narod. Thus, during their long history, it was claimed, the Bulgarian people were subjugated by different rulers; liberated themselves; were subjugated again; but were eventually resurrected. The Bulgarian people fought for their liberation from the

[70] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 13–15 and BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743 (1948): 19 (Vlahov). The Bulgarian bourgeoisie was supposed to be interested in the maintenance of the big Ottoman market, a tendency reflecting the Marxian preference for large states.

[71] Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 39–40. Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 75 argued that "In some cases, the people fought against the Turkish conquerors, but usually the feudal leaders betrayed the people's struggle, by concluding agreements with the Turks and by recognising the superiority of the Turkish sultan".

very beginning of their national subjugation.[72] The rising against two parallel yokes (a political-military, the Ottoman yoke, and a religious-spiritual, the Greek-Orthodox one) principally manifests an immortal Bulgarian spirit preserved by the people through the centuries.

Moreover, there is also a slippage from use of the concept of the modes of production to the classification of the land or the state in Bulgarian historiography of the early post-war period. For instance, textbooks refer to Bulgarian lands even before the Slavs' arrival in the Balkans. The terms, 'Bulgarian narod' and 'Bulgarian state' are used for medieval times, while the term 'Bulgarian lands' is used for ancient times. A slippage of the notion of modes of production in favour of that of language also occurred. The invention of the Bulgarian script has a central position in the construction of a Bulgarian national past, with Cyril and Methodius honoured in every textbook or historical book related to their time.[73] Last but not least, there was a slippage in favour of religion, which was seen as a historical factor promoting the productivity of labour and fostering culture and progress in Marxian terms. In a nationalistic light, Bulgarian Marxist scholars indicated that evangelisation of the Bulgarian people and the movement of the Exarchate constituted progressive forces in Bulgarian history. The former cemented the administrative centralisation of the Bulgarian state and contributed to the survival of the Bulgarian narod after the policies of assimilation that had occurred during '200 years of Byzantine yoke'. Moreover, evangelisation contributed to the foundation and further development of the Bulgarian script and literature, which were to be very significant for the Slav civilisation.[74] The Exarchate, it was argued, fomented the national movement in the 19th century.

The fusion of Marxist and nationalist elements in historiography affected the narration of the past in one further way. An old theory, Pan-Slavism, was reintroduced in historiography with a different purport. In this new context, Germans and Slavs were presented as two rival forces which had clashed with each other since primordial times;

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[72] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 163 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 79.

[73] See, for instance, Mitev (1945–1946): 427 ff on the role of Kliment in evangelisation and the dissemination of the Bulgarian script and culture.

[74] Mitev (1945–1946): 420–421 and 425. He claims that the Bulgarians were not annihilated, as for example the pre-Baltic Slavs were, because "we [the Bulgarians] had set up our own national culture earlier than many other Slav peoples; as a result, we had forged the most strong weapons: script and culture".

such Bulgarian communist perceptions dovetailed with the Czech communist depiction of the Hussite struggle as both Slav and anti-German.[75] Pan-Slavism was in accordance with the nationalism of a national belonging to a tribal kin-family. Bulgaria linked its past and future interests with the Slav peoples. Therefore, this sense of kinship had to be taken into account in the shaping of the nation and its historical path. Such a conceptualisation was in accordance with Bulgaria's adherence to the socialist bloc, headed by the Soviet Union and largely comprised of Slav nations, albeit uneasily so that the socialist bloc was ethnicised or tribalised.

Post-war 'socialist Pan-Slavism' relied on the linguistic, religious, political and cultural proximity of the Slavs. Pan-Slavism was supposed to derive its legitimisation from the distant past; the battle of Griundval in 1410 and the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878 were projected as examples of effective Slav solidarity.[76] At the same time, inter-Slav rivalries (e.g. the wars between Bulgaria and Serbia in 1885 and 1913) were reduced to fratricidal wars or accidents of history and conspiracies of the enemies of the Slav peoples.[77] Nevertheless, the Pan-Slavist idea originated from Herder,[78] while "the corresponding Slav thought, in spite of its anti-German attitude and its insistence on Slav originality or samobytnost, was deeply indebted to the Germans",[79] who were considered the eternal enemy of Slavdom.

The concept of 'eternal competition' between Slavs and Germans also laid the foundations of post-war Pan-Slavism.[80] Hence, all Slavs had a common enemy. As Mitev argued in 'Istoricheski Pregled' ('Historical Review'), the German race had been intent on conquering,

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[75] Abrams (2004): 100.

[76] It is argued that Russians, Poles, Byelorussians, and other Slavs were allied and defeated the Teutonic conquerors in the battle of Griundvald. In 1877–1878, it is argued that all the Southern Slavs allied with the Russian Army in order to destroy the Ottoman Empire, in Rabotnichesko Delo #141, 03.03.1945. However, it is forgotten, for instance, that Serbia declared war on the Ottoman Empire after the fall of Pleven, when the victory of Russian armies was looming, presumably to take part in the sharing of spoils.

[77] Mitev (1947): 86–88.

[78] Snyder (1984): 19–20 cites Herder, "Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind", 1784, chapter 4, Book 16; "To the Slav People".

[79] Kohn (1953): 2.

[80] For various 'slavisms' of the past see Krindzhalov (1946–1947): 460–464 and 476–477.

assimilating and exterminating the Slav peoples since medieval times.[81] On the other side, the Slavs were portrayed as defending their freedom and democracy.[82] German aggressionism collapsed, it was argued, after the victory of the Soviet Union over the last version of 'Germanism', namely Hitlerism. Apart from the statement that Hitlerist imperialism represented the interests of the monopolistic capital, an economic or political reason to explain racial conflicts between Germans and Slavs is entirely absent. Mitev interpreted Nazism as consistent with the racial version of pangermanistic ideas of the 19th century and the eternal aggressionism of the Germans towards the Slav lands. Thus, German aggressionism simply took the form of Nazism in the imperialist era.[83] Similarly, Burmov discusses National Socialism as the Germans' uppermost endeavour to advance eastwards, to where the Slavs lived.[84] Consequently, the Germans' alleged eternal struggle to exterminate the Slavs is largely discussed in essentially racial or tribal terms.

Bulgarian historiography had to forget or radically reinterpret some rather embarrassing pages of Marxian literature, such as Engels' excerpts referring to the Slavs as 'historyless' peoples or 'the remnants of history'[85] and Marxian aphorisms on Pan-Slavism as "a ludicrous anti-historical movement behind which stood the terrible reality of the Russian Empire". Engels denounced Pan-Slavism as:

> …an absurd anti-national current the aim of which is to subordinate the civilised West to the barbarian East, the city to the village, trade, industry and education to the primitive agriculture of Slav serfs.[86]

The historical apparatus of the BCP forgot that sentimental Pan-Slavism was derided within the BCP at the beginning of the 20th cen-

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[81] Stalin himself referred to a similar scheme in the 1930s, when he mentioned as one of the pretexts for war that "a 'superior race', e.g. the Germans, would launch a war against an 'inferior race', e.g. the Slavs, to render the 'inferior race' fruitful to rule over it". Stalin, *Report to the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik) on the work of the central Committee (1934)*, in Bruce (1973): 235.

[82] See, also, Burmov's article on the struggle of the Slavs against the Germans in Rabotnichesko Delo #141, 03.03.1945.

[83] Mitev (1945): 172–174 and 191–192.

[84] Rabotnichesko Delo #141, 03.03.1945.

[85] These excerpts from Engels were in complete contrast to the general Stalinist view of the flowering of small nations under socialism, which the Bulgarian communist historians seemed to accept. However, they contended that nations would finally disappear, even though national signs (language, territory etc.) would survive, in Mitev (1948): 292–296.

[86] Cited in Snyder (1984): 32–33.

tury; at that time, the BCP emphasised the distinction between the socialist conception of a federation of progressive states (namely a Balkan Federation), based on internationalism, and the Pan-Slav one of an agglomeration of Russian vassals, based on kinship.

Renan's fundamental axiom with regard to history-writing—that forgetting has the same importance as remembering—was also applied in the case of Bulgarian historical textbooks' treatment of party politics. A striking example concerns the description of the political origin and history of Zveno, one of the allies of the BCP within the Fatherland Front coalition. Textbooks evaluated the political consequences of the coup of 19th May, carried out by the Zveno leadership, disregarding its anti-democratic politics (suppression of political parties, execution of communists), yet stressing Zveno's intention to eliminate the power of the dynasty. Moreover, it is mentioned that Zveno followed a friendly foreign policy towards Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. The political evolution between 1934 and 1944 seems to depict Zveno's transformation from a fascist to a democratic group.[87] Having to 'have already forgotten' the coup, Zveno needed to be 'reminded' as a way of accommodating some of its members[88] to the historical and political evolution, or, in other words, to historical laws. Within this context, the communists' approach to fascists and coup organisers who had mutated and moved to the left in the course of history, is remembered in order to be forgotten. As De Certeau has pointed out,[89] temporalisation and narrativisation allows discourse to appear to ascribe to another period what does not fit into a present system. The Zveno as a group of plotters and coup organisers then seems to pertain to another period and not to that of the Fatherland Front. Within this context, an 'anti-national deed' of Zveno, i.e. a coup, is dislocated from its present 'patriotic conduct'.

As we have seen, the BCP wrote the history of the Bulgarian past fusing Marxist and nationalist categories for legitimising purposes. As a result, socio-economic formations were drawn along national

[87] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 405–409, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 86–87, and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 244–245. This thesis is also argued by Dragoicheva (1979): 71–72.

[88] Mitev (1947): 158 points out that Kimon Georgiev, the leader of Zveno and the Prime Minister of the first Fatherland Front government, was one of the most consistent adherents of the People's Front in the late 1930s and, afterwards, of the Fatherland Front.

[89] De Certeau (1988): 88–90.

lines, the eternality of the Bulgarian narod was discursively certified, classes were ascribed a patriotic or treacherous role, and an old non-communist theory, Pan-Slavism, was reintroduced, having taken on a new sense. Thus, the result of the Bulgarian communist (re)construction of the national past in the time of transition to socialism was a peculiar version of history-writing marked by the serious proximity of nationalism paying deference to Marxist methodological schemas.

4.3 *An Outline of How the Bulgarian Communists Narrated the Past of Bulgaria*

4.3.a *Bulgarian Lands Since Prehistory*

Billig points out that "a nation is more than an imagined community of people, for a national place—a homeland—also has to be imagined".[90] This geographical imagination extends to the long history of the nation as well. The place, within the boundaries of which the nation emerged and developed its first civilization, needs to be designated in an abstract and flexible manner. Smith evaluates the significance of the land for nationalism, that is, a special place for the nation to inhabit: a historic land, a homeland, an ancestral land.[91] Thus, emphasis on land, especially since primordial times, constitutes a feature of nationalism and not of Marxism.

In the historical textbooks, there are references to 'the most ancient residents of Bulgaria' hundreds of thousands of years ago. Thracians were the first people to accomplish a kind of social organisation, but 'in Bulgarian lands'.[92] Danov published a study of the sources of the ancient history of Bulgarian [our] lands.[93] Thus, a somewhat preposterous scheme was developed, which can be seen as an oxymoron in that these lands were called Bulgarian or Slav[94] before Bulgarians and Slavs settled in the area.

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[90] Billig (1995): 74.

[91] Smith A. (1999): 149.

[92] Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 5–8. Its first chapter has the title "Bulgarian lands until the coming of Slavs". In Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 3–7 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 4–6 the terms 'Bulgarian lands' and 'our lands' are used. See also the chapter title "Bulgarian lands up to the coming of the Slavs" in Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 299. The term 'Bulgarian lands' is also used in relation to the Ottoman era, see Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 75.

[93] Danov (1947).

[94] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 17 and 38.

Burmov sought to give an explanation of this oxymoron. At the 'Conference of the Workers of the Historical Front', he questioned when Bulgarian history began: in the time of Slavs and pre-Bulgarians or in prehistoric times as it was written in the old and new programme of the textbooks on Bulgarian history. Burmov suggested that the conference should think about the population who lived in the Bulgarian [our] land before Slavs and pre-Bulgarians settled there. His thesis was that this population should not be excluded from Bulgarian history, since "it bequeathed its blood and culture to the Slavs and pre-Bulgarians inhabited later the Bulgarian lands".[95] This thesis would constitute the basis of the future myth of the ethnic descent of contemporary Bulgarians, that they were a mixture of Thracians, Slavs, and pre-Bulgarians. Lambrev, a longer-standing member of the BCP than Burmov, argued that the prehistoric era was the first stage in the periodisation of Bulgarian history. It may not have been the history of the Bulgarian narod, but it should be included in the 'Bulgarian history of our fatherland'.[96] Thus, paying lip service to Marxian axioms and idioms, a slippage to nationalist categories, such as land, and to myths of an ancestral homeland proved inescapable. The concern with the geographical location of the nation in ancient times coheres with historicist obsessions of nationalists rather than historical materialism. It was the result of periodisation on national grounds that Bulgarian communist 'historical workers' embarked on.

The inclusion of Thrace in the Bulgarian lands was congruent with Bulgaria's international political demands in the early post-war years: the restoration of Western Thrace to Bulgaria. Then, Bulgaria based its claims on the language spoken by the people in those lands. The Greeks were accused of evacuating the Bulgarians from Western Thrace and expelling the Bulgarian population, when the Greek state was the 'mandatary' of the victorious in the First World War Great Powers (treaties of San Remo and of Sevres, 1920).[97] The annexation of Western Thrace to Bulgaria had constituted a national cause since the treaty of San Stefano. Even though the BCP blamed the pre-9 September Bulgarian rulers for Great-Bulgarian chauvinism and expansionism, after 9 September it was the Fatherland Front government, dominated

[95] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743 (1948): 56.
[96] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 79 and 85.
[97] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 388–389. Mitev (1948): 306 plainly notes that Thrace would be liberated from monarchist-fascist Greece and semi-feudal Turkey so that Bulgaria could realise the unification of her lands.

by the BCP, which promoted the same Bulgarian cause for an outlet to the Aegean Sea before the international peace conferences.

4.3.b *Presentation of Origin*

As well as a myth of ethnoscape, myths of ethnic descent (temporal origin, location and migration), as defined by Smith,[98] were also articulated. Smith identifies myths of temporal origin, or when we were begotten, as one of the main tasks of nationalist historians, i.e. the dating of the community's origins so that it can be located in time and in relation to other relevant communities. In the case of Bulgaria, the date 681 is that of the community's origin,[99] but also the time when feudalism began in the Bulgarian lands. Hence, a category of nationalism is reconciled with a Marxian one.

Korenev, in Shturmovak #22, 25.03.1945. "Mutsenka, our theory of the Turanian-Teutonic origin of Bulgarians has fallen".

Myths of location and migration, or where we came from and how we got here, define an acknowledged and distinctive homeland. Both Slavs and Asparuhian pre-Bulgarians who settled in the lands of the contemporary Bulgarian state migrated to and located themselves in that area. For the Marxist Bulgarian historians of the early post-war period, the question under debate was which ethnic element emerged earliest and finally prevailed. A Slav origin for Bulgarians was consistent with belonging to the eastern socialist bloc, the backbone of which was identified with the Slav nations. Consequently, Bulgaria was indebted to the East and not the West.

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[98] Smith A. (1999): 63–64.

[99] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 37, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 3, and Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 14.

The origin of the Bulgarians was, and still is, a complicated question.[100] The Bulgarian people developed a Slav language, whereas their ethnic name is of Turkish descent. In the historical schoolbooks of the early post-war years, it is argued that *pre-Bulgarians*,[101] a tribe of Turkish origin, inhabited the area to the south of the Danube. The term *pre-Bulgarians* has evidently prevailed with respect to the historical narration of early medieval times. However, it is argued that the majority of the *pre-Bulgarian* group of Asparuh, who founded the first Bulgarian state, were Slavs. Therefore, Asparuh established a feudal Slav-Bulgarian state, consisting of Slavs and *pre-Bulgarians*.[102] Adding the prefix *pre*, the authors of Bulgarian history suggested that there was a situation in which the Slav people of the eastern Balkan Peninsula had leaders of a different origin whose names would determine their ethnicity.

Lambrev,[103] following the theory of the Slav origin of the Bulgarian people as expounded by Derzhavin,[104] argues that the first Bulgarian state in the Balkans was in essence established by the local Slav population and not by Asparuh, a leader of a multi-ethnic group. Vlahov points out that the first Bulgarian state was of Slav ethnic content because the Slav masses were much larger in number than the Turanian horde of Asparuh.[105] Derzhavin, also, claims that Asparuhian Bulgarians were Slavs. Since they lived in the Caucasus, Asparuhian Bulgarians had become Slavs; this was apart from their leadership, which had adopted Hazarian or other oriental political and cultural

[100] There is also a question of whether the 'making of Slavs' is a matter of invention, imagining and labelling by Byzantine authors respective to the military and political potential of the groups settled on its northern boundaries. Curta (2001) claims that no people called themselves Slavs up to the time of the "Russian Primary Chronicle" (long after early medieval times); hence, the term 'Slavs' underwent a 'national use' for claims to ancestry. On the other hand, it is even doubted that Bulgarians are Slavs. Tzvetkov (1998), after a strong critique of the 'Slavian myth', deduces that Bulgarians are a more ancient group than either Slavs or Turks.

[101] Burmov (1948): 328–336 claims that the pre-Bulgarians were an ethnic mixture of Sarmates, Onogures and other groups. He surmises that the process of the pre-Bulgarian ethnogenesis determined their Turkish character.

[102] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 28–36 *passim*, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 3–4, Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 13–14, Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 20.

[103] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 87.

[104] Not accidentally, Derzhavin's theory on the origin of the Bulgarian people is the first article in the first volume of the *Istoricheski Pregled*.

[105] Vlahov in BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743 (1948): 15.

habits.[106] Asparuh governed the territory of the north-eastern Balkan Peninsula after a compromise with the Slav tribes who settled in this area. Pre-Bulgarians, in essence, contributed to the Bulgarian state, strengthening its power and becoming settled within frontiers.[107]

The theory of the Hun origin of pre-Bulgarians was presented as congruent with the political considerations of the 'chauvinist and fascist science' of the past regime. This theory claimed that Bulgarians were Huns in terms of culture and spirit and in biological aspects, and not Slavs. As a result, Bulgarians had ethnic affinities with Germans, Hungarians, Finns, and the Japanese; a thesis that affiliated Bulgaria with the Axis.[108] In essence, one theory which aligned with certain political considerations was displaced by another, that of the Slav origin of Bulgarians. Theories of the origin of Bulgarians constitute a striking example of how a past is ethnically (re)constructed depending on contemporary political considerations.

Bulgarians, who were seen as a part of the Slav race, were perceived as peaceful, freedom-loving, creative and amiable people recalling Herder's "Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit". According to Herder's idealism, the Slavs, being the last ones in the peoples' linear evolution, would spread peace, justice and virtue all over the world, "since politics and legislation are bound in the long run to promote quiet toil and charm discourse among the nations of Europe"'.[109] Herder's idealism was consistent with the idea that the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc were the adherents and defenders of peace on Earth.

The Slavs seem to have skipped the social-economic stage of slavery. Feudalism appears to have succeeded primitive communism without

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[106] Krindzhalov (1947): 4–5 supports the Hun origin of pre-Bulgarians, but, like Derzhavin, he argues that since very early times they had been 'slavicised' apart from their leadership. He also agrees with Derzhavin that Asparuhian Bulgarians were 'slavicised', ibid., pp. 53–54.

[107] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 139 (Krindzhalov).

[108] Krindzhalov (1947): 8–30 *passim*. See also his position in BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 139.

[109] Herder finishes his chapter on the Slav peoples as follows: "so you, once diligent and happy peoples who have sunk so low, will at last awaken from your long and heavy slumber, will be freed from your enslaving chains, …and will once again celebrate on them your ancient festivals of peaceful toil and commerce", in Adler and Menze (1997): 299–301. For an analysis of Herder's theory, see Papoulia (2002): 269 ff. For the implication of Herder's philosophy for the Pan-Slav conception, see Barnard (1965): 173 ff.

the mediation of the slave-holding social-economic formation.[110] The major question is how a dominant group emerged from a kin-bound society based on common ownership and how it controlled economic production. The historical textbooks offered no explanation; hence, a national aspect of an idealistic past overshadows Marxism.

As has been shown so far, economic, social and class analysis yielded ground to the search for an ethnic origin in the historical past; an idealistic analysis of the Slav racial character contradicts materialism; and an attempt to show evidence of the Slavs' progressive element rendered race the 'womb of history' and not a class. As concerns this part of the historical narration, ethnic approaches prevailed over purely Marxist ones. This approach to the past was also dictated by political considerations of the time congruent with the reshaping of Pan-Slavism as belonging to the socialist bloc.

4.3.c *Byzantine Times*

The Slavs' contribution to the history of mankind is exaggerated in historical schoolbooks by the view that they exerted influence over the Byzantine Empire with regard to the abolition of the slave-holding way of production.[111] The authors of one of the schoolbooks maintained that "the slave-holding labour was liquidated because of the revolutionary blow of the Slavs against the [Byzantine] Empire".[112] Thus, not only does one mode of production substitute for another becoming obsolete, but people could induce revolution in the mode of production after living in an area. Derzhavin alleged that the Slavs renewed the Byzantine Empire, as German tribes did the Roman Empire.[113] It seems that people, nations or races, rather than modes of production, are the driving force of history. Another slippage from Marxian to national categories came about in order to emphasise the significance of the historical role of Slavs, including Bulgarians, in south-eastern Europe.

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[110] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 10–11 (Mitev), BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 106–107 (Natan), and BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 745 (1948): 64 (Krindzhalov). The notion that the Slavs skipped the slave-holding social-economic formation is also reported in the Soviet scholarship, mainly by Prigozhin and Grekov, in Yaresh (1962a): 54–61 and Vucinich (1962): 123–124.

[111] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 33 and Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 4.

[112] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 33. See, also, Mitev (1947): 9–10.

[113] Derzhavin (1945): 32.

A significant issue concerning the narration of early Byzantine times is the extent to which the Byzantine Empire influenced Bulgaria. Bulgarian Marxist historians seem to accept that the Byzantine Empire did exert her influence over Bulgaria and at the same time to argue that the newly-established Bulgarian state helped to regenerate the Byzantine Empire. Thus, on the one hand, they emphasised the view that Slavs slavicised the Byzantine Empire to a considerable degree, sapped her slave-holding system, democratised her social life, and revitalised her army with new blood. On the other hand, strong Byzantine influence over Bulgaria in economic and financial terms is mentioned in order to explain the transformation of the mode of production in the Bulgarian state. Under the influence of Byzantium, a patriarchal-tribal system of Slav communities was developed in a territorial community of private property and class stratification, which ripened the conditions for state formation.[114]

The evangelisation of the Bulgarian people played a progressive role in Bulgarian history. It hastened the liquidation of the tribal system and the advance of feudalism,[115] that is, an upper social-economic stage. In general, Byzantine upper-class cultural elements were regarded as progressive insofar as they strengthened the Bulgarian state by increasing centralisation. The adoption of these elements is seen as the politics of the Bulgarian upper-classes to reinforce and legitimise their power.[116] For that time, it was an advancing element in human history. In parallel, however, the Bulgarian potential is described by oxymora, such as 'active reception' and 'creative assimilation'.[117] These oxymora are produced on the basis of a Marxian theoretical tool for explaining historical evolution, that of the role of progressive and reactionary elements, and on the basis of a nationalist approach, which sought to counter a view that Bulgaria was inferior to the Byzantine Empire. By inference, concerns to highlight the cultural self-sufficiency of Slavs and their role in the social-economic course of south-eastern Europe convert peoples into historical agents framing the modes of production.

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[114] BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743 (1948): 14–15 (Vlahov). Angelov (1945–1946): 385–411 reports a considerable number of similarities between the Byzantine Empire and the Bulgarian state in state organisation, the system of taxation and economic rules.

[115] Lambrev claims that Christianity was the religion of feudalism, in BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 88.

[116] Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 28–29. The authors also recognise the Byzantine influences upon Simeon and his achievements.

[117] For the Soviet counterparts see Shevshenko (1962): 159–161.

4.3.d *Cyril and Methodius*

A myth of a civilising mission, as Schöpflin[118] calls it, comes into question regarding the narration of the Bulgarian state and the invention of the Cyrillic script. Such myths state that the nation in question performed some special mission, some particular function. It was argued that, in medieval times, Bulgaria was the most powerful and most developed Slav centre, which preserved the achievements of Byzantine culture and delivered them to the other Slav peoples. Russia became the centre of Slav culture after the South Slavs fell under the Turkish yoke. Cyril, Methodius, and their students, by inventing the Cyrillic script, made Bulgaria the cradle of Slav culture and civilization.

Zhendov, in Shturmovak #30, 20.05.1945."When we [Bulgarians] had script, you [Germans] were speaking only to your horses".

[118] Schöpflin (1997): 31.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding their origin,[119] Chervenkov underscored that Bulgarians had reasons to be proud of Cyril and Methodius, because Bulgarians, first of all the Slavs, developed the Slav literature, and the contribution made by these two brothers to the Slav thesaurus was great.[120] In a talk given on the occasion of a meeting to celebrate Cyril and Methodius, Chervenkov stresses, "the Slav spirit had firstly developed in Bulgaria, whereby it was disseminated to Russia". Chervenkov also recognised that the brothers had furnished the Slav peoples with the ability to preserve and advance their national culture in their mother-tongue.[121] The decisive role of the Bulgarians in Slav history is illuminated.

Karakostov explicitly cited an expert of Paisii's 'Slavyanobilgarska Istoriya' (Slav-Bulgarian History): Bulgarians were the first Slav people to develop Slav vocal sounds, books and sacred baptism. He adds that Kliment, a student of Cyril and Methodius who was of Bulgarian origin, composed the Cyrillic alphabet. Afterwards, it was distributed to the Russians, who retrieved and contributed to the blossoming of Slav enlightenment in the times of yokes of other Slavs.[122] Therefore, considering Bulgaria as the cradle of Slav literature and culture emerges to be a sort of a civilising mission undertaken by Bulgarians.

A significant 'forgetting' occurs in the narration of Cyril and Methodius's mission. First of all, this mission, dictated by the Byzantine Empire and not by their own Slav sentiments, resulted from the interstate relations of that time. Cyril and Methodius were sent to Moravia because of the alliance that Boris I, the Bulgarian king, had formed with the Serbian ruler against the East Roman Empire. The Glagolitic alphabet, forerunner of the Cyrillic, was invented in Moravia. Boris's adoption of Christianity from the German clergy and a project of alliance with Luis the German are also forgotten. A central point of the narration is the German opposition to the dissemination of Slav lit-

[119] There is a certainty of their Slav origin, in Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 22–23 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 31. Kiselkov (1945): 35–83, an author from the capitalist era, repudiates the hypothesis of the Greek origin of Cyril and Methodius and argues that they definitely were Slavs.

[120] Cited in Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 23 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 33.

[121] Chervenkov (1945): 32–34.

[122] Karakostov (1945): 9. Mitev (1945–1946): 433 shares the same view as Karakostov: Bulgaria established its own culture which was disseminated to the Serbs and the Russians.

erature, both in school textbooks and historiography. A fierce German persecution of Cyril and Methodius is highlighted.[123]

Such an interpretation of the past fitted in with the political considerations of the era in question. The enlightening achievements of Cyril and Methodius are contrasted with the 'cultural backwardness' of the Germans. The Slavs' superiority over the Germans is underlined claiming that, by founding the Slav script, the 'doctrine of the three sacred languages' (that is, that the languages of the gospels could only be the Latin, the Greek, and the Jewish) suffered a decisive stroke 600 years before Luther.[124] Germans were considered the main enemies of Slav nations, because they had been belligerents until May 1945 and because of Stalin's fear of a future rehabilitation of Germany's military strength and a new attack against the Soviet Union. A Slav or Eastern bloc would serve to obstruct any future German expansionism eastwards. As the Bulgarian script was the first Slav one, the Bulgarians played an important part in Slav culture. The articulation of their civilising mission might be seen as securing a pivotal role for Bulgaria in Slav culture and literature.

4.3.e *Survival of the Nation Under the Ottoman Yoke (14th–18th Century)*

According to the Bulgarian authors of that time, three main factors show evidence of the survival of the Bulgarian nation under the Ottoman yoke: uprisings, the 'haiduks' (bandits on the mountains), and the church. These factors underpin the evolutionary schema of narod to nation, since they indicate the ability of the Bulgarian narod to survive through the ages. In another case, a national category, the narod, undermines pure Marxian categories, e.g. classes, in the historical narration of the so-called historical front; rather than explaining the transformation of modes of production the Bulgarian 'workers of the historical front' developed a 'sleeping beauty' thesis, whereby a dormant nation awakens and demands its national liberation and independence.

All the uprisings which broke out in the Bulgarian lands are supposed to have a national character, even though it is argued that they

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[123] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 61–70; Karakostov (1945): 7. See, also, the theses of the Central Committee of the 24th May about the assertion of Cyril and Methodius's Slav origin, in Rabotnichesko Delo #204, 17.05.1945.

[124] Mitev (1945–1946): 428.

were the outcome of economic and social circumstances as well as of people's discontent. Focusing on the Bulgarian people's desire for freedom and presenting the leaders of these revolutions as representatives of the oppressed narod, the textbooks' historical narration underestimates the selfish motivations of the leaders, overshadows interpersonal agreements, and forgets that mercenary armies figure in uprisings.[125] It is also forgotten that these uprisings were usually provoked by outside factors rather than by active local leaders, the discontent of the local population, or the national consciousness of the Bulgarians. As the uprisings are narrated as being of national character, it is mentioned, without any further comment, that in two such uprisings, an ancestor of the medieval Bulgarian czars turned up.[126] Certainly, the leaders of the uprisings used this artifice in order to legitimise authority and to attract the peasants with a Christian ruler.

The context of these uprisings was a war waged by a European state against the Ottoman Empire. It has already been said that the Bulgarian people anticipated their liberation from abroad. While all the European states disappointed them, Bulgarian trust in the *dyado Ivan* (Grandfather Ivan) was finally justified.[127] Five centuries of slavery is supposed to have instilled in every Bulgarian a sense of brotherhood and unity with all Slavs. It strengthened the belief that without the help of 'Grandfather Ivan', the biggest and the most powerful brother of the Slav family, liberation could not have been attained.[128] Within this context, more contemporary claims of affiliation with the Soviet Union were historically grounded. Neither the unwillingness of the people to rise massively against the foreign yoke nor the absence of an autonomous Bulgarian uprising throughout the centuries of the Ottoman yoke[129] is discussed at all.

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[125] Tzvetkov (1993) vol. 1: 280, for instance, refers to a mercenary army sent by Germany and Transylvania to support the uprising of Chiprovets in 1598.

[126] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 164–165 and 176.

[127] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 7–9 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 79–82. 'Dyado Ivan' ('Grandfather Ivan') symbolised Russia as the safeguard of the Balkan Orthodox people. It was the counterpart of Ivan the Terrible.

[128] The struggle of (1946): 9. References to 'Dyado Ivan' were made in the early post-war years; see, for instance, the slogan on the occasion of the week on the Bulgarian-Soviet friendship: "we have been and we will be with 'Dyado Ivan'", in Rabotnichesko Delo #269, 19.11.1946.

[129] The single autonomous Bulgarian uprising, headed by the successors of the fallen Bulgarian Czars, occurred in 1403, in Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 79.

The haiduks represent the first manifestation of the emerging national consciousness and dignity. It is maintained that they fought for people's rights and wreaked revenge on the Ottomans for their crimes against the Bulgarian people. It is asserted that people admired, loved, and assisted haiduks.[130] People saw haiduks as their defenders from the arbitrariness of the Turkish evil-doers.[131] Later on, the haiduks were converted into fighters for national honour, freedom and independence.[132] However, it is not explained how banditry was transformed into national struggle.

It is questionable whether they only took revenge against the Turks. According to some Ottoman sources, Christians and Jews were also victims of the haiduks.[133] Similarly, it is doubtful whether they took action to 'avenge' for something more than their honour. Ottoman sources on haiduk trials show evidence that haiduks killed people to uncover the whereabouts of hidden fortunes.[134] Furthermore, Ottoman sources do not show evidence that people assisted haiduks. On the contrary, in some cases the citizens turned against them.[135]

No serious economic reasons (the transformation of the landholding system from 'timar' to 'chiflik' and the devastation of cities and countries) or class antagonisms are provided in the historical textbooks to explain the phenomenon of banditry. Hobsbawm[136] observes that (a) banditry became successful in the ramshackle and effectively decentralised Ottoman empire, (b) banditry tended to become epidemic in times of pauperisation and economic crisis and (c) narration on banditry was influenced, if not invented, by German literary historians,

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[130] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 180–181, Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 42. On the contrary, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 9–10 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 81–82 point out that "haiduks did not fight for the liberation of Bulgaria". All the authors present haiduks as avengers against feudal oppression and the injustice of the '*Turkish* feudal system'. Even as social brigands, the authors claim that haiduks defended the Bulgarian people and people praised them as heroes.

[131] Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 42. Mitev (1947): 36 argues that irrespective of the personal reasons that led them to resist Turkish rule, haiduks stood up for the people against Turks and Bulgarian chorbadzhis.

[132] Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 1, 32 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 104, 110 and 114.

[133] If the haiduks only targeted Turks, how could the existence of Muslim haiduks be explained? For the existence of Muslim haiduks, see Matkovski (1966): 67.

[134] Only one out of 109 haiduks stated a religious motivation for his deeds, Matkovski (1966): 77.

[135] Matkovski (1966): 69, 72, 74, 77, 81.

[136] Hobsbawm (1969): 16–17 and 112.

who wrote novels about bandit-heroes. Such a materialist analysis is skipped in textbooks of the early post-war years. Even when the first and second elements of Hobsbawm's analysis are mentioned, they are overshadowed because of the national contrast between haiduks and 'Turkish rulers'. The third element, that of invention, cannot be admitted by a narration of the past with national criteria. The possibility that haiduks were only concerned with plundering is not discussed. And, most importantly, relations between haiduks and pashas are forgotten. It is also forgotten that parts of the non-regular Ottoman army, e.g. 'kirdzhalis', sometimes revolted, fled to the mountains, and took up banditry.[137]

The description of the haiduks way of life matches that of the partisans. The haiduks were recalled in the Second World War so that partisans could be presented as their descendants. Heroes of the remote past, that is, the haiduks, who displayed the qualities of courage, wisdom, self-sacrifice, zeal, and stoicism, found their imitators in the resistance movement, that is, the partisans. The combination of social and national elements in their struggle exalted the partisan movement, as the counterpart of the haiduk phenomenon in the resistance movement.

The third factor, which preserved the Bulgarian national character through the ages of yoke, was the church. Monasteries in particular played a significant role in Bulgarian spiritual regeneration, preserving the Bulgarian spirit, consciousness and language.[138] A romantic image is depicted: in 'kiliini uchilishta' (cell schools) "a priest or an instructor kept in church the flame of the Bulgarian-Slav literary tradition alive".[139] Therefore, the survival of the Bulgarian spirit assumes a more heroic aspect. The Ottomans never banned any language, however, and literature was mainly a matter for religious institutions.

The Bulgarian nation had to struggle against a double yoke in order to bring about its renaissance. Along with the 'Turkish' military and political yoke, the Bulgarian nation had to confront the Greek spiritual yoke, imposed by the Patriarchate and the Greek bishops,[140] who

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[137] Stavrianos (2000[2]): 366.

[138] Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 83 underlines that "the achievements of the Bulgarian literature and culture were preserved in monastery libraries and dark shelters".

[139] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 189. The authors reckon that teachers of the 'kiliini uchilishta' were sometimes laymen, ibid., p. 205.

[140] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 9.

implemented a politics of denationalization of the Bulgarians.[141] A national identity was attributed to a religious institution, such as the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Moreover, the Patriarchate is identified with the Greek bourgeois aspirations of economic domination in the Balkans.[142] The needs of narration to nationalise religious institutions result in contradiction with the Marxian worldview: an institution of the superstructure of feudalism, that is, the church, becomes a crucial tool of the capitalist forces of production.

The establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate is considered the first stage towards national liberation. The church struggle purported that there should be recognition of Bulgarian nationality from the Sublime Porte; it appears as a forerunner of the political struggle for national liberation.[143] This premise created two contradictions. First, Mitev speaks about "the establishment of the national Bulgarian church". As a result, a religious institution, the 'Rum millet', dating from the beginning of the Ottoman rule becomes synonymous with the Greek people.[144] Second, whereas the Exarchate was an aspect of the struggle for the national recognition of Bulgaria, whereby the bourgeoisie had the hegemonic role, it ultimately expressed the interests of chorbadzhis.[145] In order that the Exarchate be achieved, Russia assisted Bulgarian efforts. The active Russian representative in Istanbul, Graf Ignatiev, contributed to Bulgarian spiritual independence.[146] Thus, the Bulgarian Marxist authors provided evidence that the Slav big brother of Bulgaria supported her national cause.

The National Revival of Bulgaria is associated with the emergence of capitalism and the Bulgarian bourgeoisie. It is presented as the outcome of certain economic and social conditions, namely, the development of a commodity money economy, the decline of feudalism, and a bourgeois-democratic revolution.[147] This view in combination with

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[141] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 186.

[142] Mitev (1947): 32.

[143] Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 1 and Mitev (1947): 35.

[144] Mitev (1947): 31. This identification causes a contradiction: whereas Mitev writes that the Patriarch sold bishop positions, he continues that Greek bishops wanted to earn the money they paid for their positions, ibid., p. 32. The question is why non-Greek clergymen could not buy such positions.

[145] Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743 (1948): 19 (Vlahov).

[146] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 220–221.

[147] Zarev (1946[3]): 16–51; Kosev (1947–1948): 317–332; Natan (1949[4]): 492–496; and BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743 (1948): 12 and 18 (Vlahov). Mitev (1945–1946): 272 holds the same theory, although it writes that "the narod was quickly revived and woke up from a deep sleep". Natan (1949[4]) argues that the

the doctrine that nation is a product of capitalism makes the term 'revival' quite problematic. The question is how a national revival can occur simultaneously with the emergence of a nation. National Revival provides evidence that the Bulgarian Marxist authors maintained the backbone of the old regime's narration of the past. Short-term political considerations, such as persuading historians, academics, and high-ranking clergymen to cooperate with the new regime,[148] legitimised past historical aspects and old theories despite the emergence of a different social regime. All in all, the narration of the awakening of the Bulgarian nation and its 'revival', the survival of the Bulgarian narod through Ottoman times and post-war political considerations concluded in an account of significant national elements.

4.3.f *National Liberation Movement Against the Turkish Yoke (Circa 1860–1878)*

The resistance movement during the Second World War had been identified with the national liberation movement. The legacy of this identification lasted into the early post-war years. In this period, the concept that the Fatherland Front had realised the ideals of the Bulgarian Renaissance was promoted[149] in order that the Fatherland Front could present itself as the embodiment of the Bulgarian nation. In this area, socialist historiography had to confront some serious 'fascist falsifications': the individual approach of the leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival; the elimination of the progressive and revolutionary perspective of their ideology; and the neglect to mention the sacrifices of the Russian people.[150] The first of the above falsifications seems to contradict the second, however. How is it possible to describe the pro-

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national revival heralded a twofold liberation: an economic one from Ottoman feudal fetters and a national-cultural one from Turkish dominion; therefore, the process of bourgeois-democratic revolution coincided with national awakening leading to a mass people's revolution. Yet, as Daskalov (2004): 81 points out, there is an inversion and circularity with regard to the Bulgarian Marxist approach to the Revival: "the bourgeois revolution should be explained by capitalism, but instead the bourgeois revolution itself becomes the proof of capitalism"; markedly, the national revolution was followed by economic stagnation instead of the progress of capitalism.

[148] See, for instance, the words of Dimitrov: "Let our honest members of the Holy Synod and all church servants of the Bulgarian church understand that…our church must be really narodna, republican, progressive", in Rabotnichesko Delo #115, 28.05.1946.

[149] Rabotnichesko Delo #347, 01.11,1945, Zarev (1946[3]): 138.

[150] Rabotnichesko Delo #37, 30.10.1944 (article writen by Mateev).

gressive and revolutionary perspective of the ideology of the leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival, if not by an individual approach? The role of the individual in history, also having derived from the Soviet model of historical pedagogy, constitutes one more inconsistency with Marxian axioms, since Marx and Engels subject individuals to unalterable and immutable laws of social development.

The role of the individual, that of Levski[151] for instance, is stressed for two reasons: first because the adherents of the Bulgarian national revolution were few in number and, second, ideas of certain individuals suited the approach of the BCP to the National Liberation movement. Levski is depicted as a genuine democrat and an ardent patriot:

> He was the first who became aware of the exclusive weight of revolutionary organisation as a unique and effective means for securing the success of a narodna revolution. He was the first who estimated the great political and practical significance of the organisation and accentuated its priority as concerns the realisation of a revolution.[152]

Levski demonstrated the significance of leadership and the necessity of centralism for the success of a revolutionary movement.[153] Thus, a national hero, whose ideas and qualities could be identified with those of the Party, was configured.

The historical apparatus of the BCP projected contemporary political ideas onto the main figures of the Bulgarian national revolutionary movement. For instance, the interconnection of internationalism and patriotism in the ideology of Levski and Botev[154] is stressed in order to reinforce contemporary notions such as 'proletarian internationalism' and 'socialist patriotism'. Botev was presented as an example of the unity of patriotism and internationalism following Dimitrov's view that genuine patriotism is compatible with internationalism.[155] To assimilate political ideas and figures of the national revolutionary movement with the politics of the BCP, historical and philosophical details had to be forgotten or, at least, underplayed. Botev's utopian socialist or even anarchist political thought seems to be independent of his political role in the national revolutionary movement. His

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[151] Too many works were written about Levski in that time.

[152] The same extract in both Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 247 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 112.

[153] Pavlov (1946): 120–121.

[154] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 225, Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]):119 and 123 respectively. See, also, Minkov (1947): 9.

[155] Pavlov (1946): 11 and Tsanev (1948): 11.

utopian socialism seems to be influenced by Russian revolutionaries (Chernyshevsky and Nechaev, for instance) and the Paris Commune in general and not by Western political thought.[156] His cosmopolitanism is described as compatible with his genuine and ardent patriotism.[157] Significantly, Botev, as a symbolic figure, was appropriated by the anarchists as well.[158] The youth anarchist-communist organisation was called 'Hristo Botev'.

The influences of Garibaldi and Mazzini over the ideas of Rakovski and Levski, in particular, are suppressed.[159] The impact of the French Revolution on the socio-political thought of the Bulgarian revolutionaries is categorically limited.[160] Regarding Levski, only Gandev[161] criticised his leadership abilities and discussed Levski's extreme difficulties finding chieftains to serve in his army, and the indifference of Bulgarian émigrés in Romania and the Bulgarian people in the Ottoman Empire. Regarding Rakovski, his membership of a Greek secret society and status as a Greek subject is overlooked. What is totally forgotten is the mistrust, criticism, and disaffection that the central national figures expressed many times towards Russia and Pan-Slav ideas. It was

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[156] Pavlov (1946): 9–10, Natan (1945–1946): 293–296 and Tsanev (1948): 9. Zarev (1946[3]): 124 and Natan (1945–1946): 296–997 mention Proudhon's influence over Botev; Natan (1945–1946): 291 notes the socialist-utopian character of Botev's thought and underlines that it was impossible for Botev to be a Marxist for social-economic reasons. As a negative aspect of his personality, Zarev (1946[3]): 129, judges that he could not outlive his "Communarian idealistic views that the main and only one enemy of peoples is their governments". Notwithstanding, he surprisingly concludes that the Fatherland Front's nationwide democratic movement incarnated Botev's ideas and patriotism. On the contrary, Tzvetkov (1993) vol. 1: 476 asserts that Botev maintained close relations with Bakunin's anarchists, Stavrianos (2000[2]): 378 points out his nihilist doctrines and Blagoev, *Contribution to the history of socialism in Bulgaria (1906)*, (1985): 213–215 considers Botev as a Proudhonian anarchist.

[157] Zarev (1946[3]): 128.

[158] BCP Records Fund 272, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 90 (1946): 1.

[159] Pitasio (1986): 46–55 and Tzvetkov (1993) vol. 1: 450–451. Gandev (1945): 97–105 emphasizes Levski's Mazzinian ideological background, but he was vehemently castigated at the 'Conference of the Workers of the Historical Front', mainly by Zarev, Mitev, and Topalov, in BCP Records Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 743 (1948): 140–141 and Fund 146, Inventory 5, Archival Unit 744 (1948): 3 and 37.

[160] Berov (1989): 84–96 enumerates cases of the impact of the French Revolution on socio-political thought in Bulgaria during the 19th century: on the ideas of Slaveikov, Karavelov, Botev and Levski through Russian revolutionaries, and on the promulgation of the Bulgarian tricolour national flag.

[161] Gandev (1945): 110–118. Though he was a historian of the old regime and his theses came under severe attack by Marxist historians, who were keen on a much more heroic narration of the national liberation movement.

Rakovski who wrote the pamphlet entitled, "Russia's murderous policy towards the Bulgarians".[162]

The BCP's short-term political considerations were legitimised by the project that unfulfilled political aims of the national liberation movement were in accord with the politics of the BCP and the Fatherland Front in the early post-war period. First, the historical narration of the national movement underlined a combination of national aspirations and social transformation[163] similar to communist slogans. Bulgarian national leaders envisaged a Bulgarian society free from the Ottoman yoke and based on principles of solidarity, liberty and equality.

Second, the proposals of all the prominent national revolutionaries (Rakovski, Levski, Karavelov, and Botev)[164] focused on a kind of federation, South-Slav or Balkan. This provided the BCP the opportunity to gain legitimisation for its plans for a South-Slav federation with Yugoslavia. It is presented as a democratic and anti-chauvinist enunciation of the national liberation leaders, whereas the historical necessity of seeking alliance with opponents to the Ottoman Empire is hardly mentioned.[165] The historical necessity of a powerful alliance of all the Balkans faded in comparison with the 'democratic convictions' of the Bulgarian national revolutionaries. Therefore, a vision of a Slav or Balkan federation is presented as due to the Pan-Slav, democratic, populist and socialist ideas of the Bulgarian national-revolutionary leaders.

Some other current political issues that concerned the communists were vindicated by drawing parallels with the time of the national liberation movement. Legitimisation of the death sentence passed on many oppositionists was gained by Levski's notion[166] that the death sentence should be the penalty of *lèse majesté*. The Bulgarian historiography of the time claimed that the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a People's Republic by the referendum of 8 September 1946

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[162] Tzvetkov (1993) vol. 1: 445.

[163] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 235 entitle the relevant chapter "National-revolutionary Democratic movement".

[164] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 241–243, 248 and 249 respectively. See, also, Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 104–105. In the textbook of Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 24, a single reference to Balkan federation is made.

[165] For instance, Bymov's article in Rabotnichesko Delo #38, 31.10.1944.

[166] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 248 and Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 19 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 114.

stemmed from the visions of the figures of the Bulgarian Renaissance.[167] Moreover, abolition of the privileges of the ruling strata derived its legitimisation from the Renaissance. Lastly, the reciprocity among the Slav nations crowned the achievement of the objectives of the leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival.[168]

The anti-national class of 'chorbadzhis' (landowners of Bulgarian origin) was so-presented as to highlight similarities with and relevance to contemporary political groups. Botev seemed to exclude chorbadzhis from nation,[169] as Bulgarian communists excluded their political enemies. The inimical role of chorbadzhis[170] in the preparation for and engagement in the revolution is also highlighted. The participation of two Bulgarian chorbadzhis in Levski's trial is underlined.[171] As well as the foreign oppressor, there was a treacherous internal anti-revolutionary element. Priest Kristyu, who betrayed Levski, constituted the counterpart of the 'traitors of the Bulgarian nation' in the 20th century.[172] Bulgarian society in the second half of the 19th century is presented as identical with that of the early post-war period, when instead of chorbadzhis, there were bourgeois and reactionary elements who behaved treacherously. One of the reasons for the failure of the April Uprising was treason committed in some areas.

The April Uprising offered the opportunity for associations with the early post-war period. As in the April Uprising the Bulgarian people were absolutely united; in the resistance movement and the struggle of the Fatherland Front against the opposition the Bulgarian people became one body, one entity. As traitors had betrayed the April Uprising, contemporary traitors were concentrated in the opposition. Petkov was presented as a descendant of Levski's traitor, priest Kristyu. As the heroes of the April Uprising fought for a People's Republic, contemporary Bulgarians should have fought against the monarchy.[173]

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[167] See, for instance, Natan (1945–1946): 309–311.
[168] Minkov (1947): 14–18.
[169] Natan (1945–1946): 278, 286–288 and 291.
[170] Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 42–43. Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 263–264 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 130 also mention the inimical role of the big bourgeoisie.
[171] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 255. For the anti-revolutionary conduct of chorbadzhis see pp. 250–261 *passim*.
[172] Rabotnichesko Delo #130, 19.02.1945.
[173] Kondarev (1947): 6–15.

The BCP presented the April Uprising as a massive revolution[174] and a forerunner of Bulgarian independence, although, as Glenny points out,[175] what it highlighted above all was the weakness of Bulgarian nationalism. According to the historical front, ideological immaturity, the Bulgarian peoples' lack of practical preparation for a large-scale, long-lasting revolutionary movement, and the inferiority of their military equipment compared to that of the Ottomans gave grounds for the failure of the April Uprising.[176] In reality, what caused moral indignation in Europe and paved the way for the Russian invasion of the Ottoman Empire were the excessive reports published in the Western, mainly British and American press.[177] These reports halted any intervention to maintain the status quo in the Balkans. As a result, no European country or figure, including Disraeli, could impede the Russian-Turkish war. The Bulgarian Marxist historical apparatus suppressed the Western contribution[178] to Bulgarian liberation and completely forgot MacGahan's reports.[179] They emphasised that Bulgarian liberation was owed to the East.

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[174] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 40. Especially, Zarev (1946[3]): 111 gives the figure of 100,000 participants in Northern Bulgaria, where the uprising was greatest. See, also, Kondarev (1947): 4–6.

[175] Glenny (1999): 108. See, also, Meininger (1977): 252 who quotes from Strasimirov's interviews with some of the participants in the April Uprising. According to them, "the uprising was weak and would easily be crushed, much more than many expected…the peasants were quite alien to the work of the rebellion".

[176] Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 112 and 130 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 2.

[177] Glenny (1999): 109 mentions that 3,000 articles denouncing Batak and other authorities appeared in some 200 newspapers. He also quotes Shaw, who maintains that the Muslim victims outnumbered the Christian dead. Stavrianos (2000[2]): 380 gives some figures which clearly show the extent of exaggeration. "An official Turkish estimate set the casualties at 3,100 Christians and 400 Muslims. A British consular agent estimated the dead at 12,000 while an American investigator set the figure at 15,000. Subsequent Bulgarian historians claimed losses of 30,000 to 60,000". It is striking that a Bulgarian leftist sociologist in 1943, a certain Hadzhiiski, characterised the April Uprising as a "desperately brave strategy of the apostles" to provoke Ottoman authorities and attract Europe's attention, cited in Daskalov (2004): 201.

[178] Mitev (1976): 62–73 wrote an article long after the early post-war years on the significance of the European, in particular the English, public in relation to Bulgarian Independence. Even then he took for granted the exaggerations of the Turkish massacres.

[179] Moser (1987): 25 surmises that MacGahan exerted a crucial influence on British public opinion, which in turn affected the policies of Disraeli. MacGahan was an American journalist, who investigated the outcome of the April Uprising for the English newspaper, the "Daily News".

The chapter of the historical textbooks that dealt with the national liberation movement gave the appropriate opportunity to praise Russia for her sacrifices for the Bulgarian cause. The Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878 fulfilled Bulgarian expectations that *dyado Ivan* (Grandfather Ivan) would liberate them.[180] The Party's theses on this issue argue that Russia was mobilised by compassion for Slav brothers, whereas the excerpt from a volunteer's evidence, which the BCP itself selected to quote, records orthodoxy and language as Russia's motivations. A distinction between the occupying plans of the Czar and selfless people's emotions is also illustrated. The successes of the Russian-Turkish war are attributed to the unprecedented alliance among the Slavs: Russians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Byelorussians and Ukrainians.[181] Notwithstanding, it is forgotten that Serbia signed a peace treaty with the Sublime Porte in February 1877, just before the war broke out, and that she only backed Russians in late 1877, when a Russian victory seemed inevitable.

Diplomatic events which laid the groundwork for the Russian-Turkish war were forgotten or overshadowed.[182] A range of meetings were held (e.g. the Conferences of Berlin and Constantinople, the Budapest Convention, and the London Convention) and agreements made (e.g. the Reichstadt Agreement) which finally allowed Russia to intervene in Ottoman affairs backed and controlled by the rest of the European Great Powers. It was argued that not only had Bulgaria's liberation been assisted by Russia, but Russia had also imposed the San Stefano Treaty on the Sublime Porte,[183] which anticipated a large Bulgarian state; and that enemies of Slavdom, that is Germany and western European countries, modified the San Stefano Treaty at the Congress of Berlin in order to eliminate Russian influence in the Balkans. Moreover, the authors of textbooks claimed that a large Bulgar-

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[180] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 22–235, Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 56–58. Notwithstanding its cut-and-dried historical narration, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 24–27 mention the concept of *dyado Ivan*. See, also, one of the first books printed after 9 September, Bozhikov and Delyanov (1945): 3–4 and 31–32.

[181] Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 2–3, 25–26.

[182] Bozhikov and Delyanov (1945): 15–16 mention that Russia gained the consent of Germany and Austria to wage war against the Ottoman Empire after the latter rejected the measures proposed to her at the Conference of Consults in Constantinople.

[183] The San Stefano Treaty could be seen as an unsuccessful venture by Pan-Slav circles (e.g. Ignatiev, Russia's ambassador in Constantinople). For that reason, it contradicts previous inter-state agreements made by Russia and other Great Powers.

ian state was deterred, because it would impede the imperialistic plans of Western European powers in the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East.[184] At this point, it is forgotten that Russia herself had agreed that a large state in the Balkans was not to be created, in the Reichstadt Agreement (July 1876) as well as at the Conference of Constantinople and at the Budapest Convention (both in January 1877). Furthermore, it is forgotten that one of the states made most indignant by the San Stefano Treaty was Serbia.

The Bulgarian approach is that the subversion of the San Stefano Treaty left the Balkan question unresolved.[185] The Congress of Berlin also postponed the solution of the Macedonian question.[186] The Congress of Berlin set preconditions for the Balkan nations being exploited by the Great Powers. It was to perpetuate national conflicts in the peninsula. Consequently, Germany and the Western countries, that is, the hostile bloc, are described as subverting a just solution to the Bulgarian national question, whereas Russia, that is, the backbone of the bloc to which Bulgaria belonged, supported Bulgarian national interests and ideals. In this manner, Bulgaria's belonging to the socialist bloc was historically grounded.

Events, concepts and idioms derived from the time of the national liberation movement proved useful in communist discourses intended to represent the communist party and regime as heirs to this glorious page of the Bulgarian past and to legitimise communist politics. Furthermore, the narration of the national liberation movement and its international repercussions gave grounds to the Bulgarian national myth claiming that a fair and permanent resolution of the Balkan question could be in accordance with Bulgarian interests. Such a conceptualisation of the past was intended to vindicate the international policies of the Fatherland Front government, notably Bulgaria's affiliation to the socialist bloc and the Yugoslav-Bulgarian rapprochement.

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[184] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 271 and 279, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 26–28, and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 140.

[185] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 29.

[186] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 7.

4.3.g *National Integration: Eastern Rumelia-Macedonia (1885–1913)*

Eastern Rumelia is considered without question to be Bulgarian land, which should be annexed to the kingdom of Bulgaria. The annexation of Eastern Rumelia is perceived as a rectification of the injustices of the Congress of Berlin, and not deemed a result of Bulgarian bourgeois expansionism. Blagoev's claims that the annexation of Eastern Rumelia to Bulgaria was wholly Battenberg's deed against the interests of the Bulgarian people[187] are completely suppressed. On the contrary, it is declared that the Bulgarian nation, with help and encouragement from Russian officers in Eastern Rumelia, supported the annexation of Eastern Rumelia to Bulgaria as a national cause.[188] It is forgotten that Russia's policy in the years following the Russian-Turkish war became hostile towards Bulgaria and that Russia supported Serbian ambitions in Macedonia. Strikingly, Petrovich maintains that the Unification constitutes the triumph of Bulgarian nationalism and the collapse of Russia's supposed Bulgarian policy.[189]

The selective approach to the historical past is clear in dealing with Russia's final refusal of 'Bulgarian Unification'. Although the Russian officers in Eastern Rumelia supported the Bulgarian national cause, Tsarist Russia opposed it. In the textbooks, the term 'Tsarist Russia' is used when referring to its contraposition towards the 'Bulgarian Unification', whereas the term 'Russia' is used in connection with the San Stefano Treaty and the time of preparation for Unification.[190] An organic conception of the people appears: the infallible criterion of the Bulgarian people was to be able to distinguish the selfish politics of the Russian Czar from the altruistic sacrifices of the Russian people.[191] The 'Bulgarian Unification' was followed by the Serbian-Bulgarian war (1884–1885), an outcome which was deemed a result of German political, anti-Slav manoeuvres.[192]

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[187] Blagoev (1985): xxxi. Later on, Blagoev changed his mind and admitted the 'progressive' character of the unification for the development of the Bulgarian economy.

[188] Political intrigues and economic discontent are mentioned as factors that affected Bulgarian national integration, in Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 278 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 163–164. Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 33 accounts for the 'Bulgarian Unification' as a progressive step in Bulgarian history.

[189] Petrovich (1967): 87–105 argues that the Bulgarian view of Russia was decidedly ambivalent during the whole Renaissance period.

[190] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 278–300 *passim*.

[191] See, especially, Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 290.

[192] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 33–34.

The Macedonian question proves to be the most complicated one for the international affairs of early post-war Bulgaria. As a consequence, it was interpreted inconsistently. In the textbook of 1946, the authors argue that the liberation of Macedonia as well as 'Bulgarian Unification' were the major national tasks of the Bulgarian people. The national movement aimed at Macedonia's liberation was organised and sustained in Bulgaria by the end of the 19th century. The slogan for an independent and autonomous Macedonia, proclaimed in the Ilinden uprising (1903), was due, it was explained, to the multinational population of the area and to the then existing international status quo rather than a declaration by a self-conscious, independent Macedonian nation.[193] At the same time, the authors denounced the conquering, chauvinist plans of the Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek ruling classes alike.[194]

Poptomov is of the opinion that the IMRO and the Ilinden Uprising purported to 'political autonomy of Macedonia',[195] and surprisingly not to national independence, while the BCP suffered in the struggle for self-determination for the Macedonian people.[196] Referring to the central figures of the IMRO, Deltsev and Santanski, Poptomov says that they were 'sons of the Macedonian narod', whereas they held the progressive and liberation ideas of Bulgaria and spoke and wrote only in Bulgarian.[197] He considers the Macedonian population of Pirin to be very close and bound to the Bulgarian nation.[198] A year before Poptomov's book, Vlahov published his own, in which he denounced the Great-Bulgarian policy of Virhovism towards self-determination for Macedonia with the ultimate principle of annexing Macedonia to motherland Bulgaria.[199] The attempted rapprochement between

[193] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 296–297 and 350–353. Tomchev, writing about Sandanski in Rabotnichesko Delo #181, 19.04.1945, certainly does not recognise a separate Macedonian nation, while he does use terms such as 'Macedonian population', 'free and autonomous Macedonia', 'Macedonian revolutionary movement' and 'Macedonian spirit'. He presents Sandanski as "herald of a new spirit and a new consciousness among the Balkan peoples and among the diverse nationalities of Macedonia". This spirit and consciousness are not necessarily Macedonian in national terms.

[194] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 354–359.

[195] Poptomov (1948): 6.

[196] Poptomov (1948): 27–28.

[197] Poptomov (1948): 6 and 31.

[198] Poptomov (1948): 30 and 33.

[199] Vlahov (1947): 9–14.

Yugoslavia and Bulgaria between 1944 and 1948 resulted in an uncertain and inconsistent narration of the Macedonian question.[200]

The complexity of the approach to the Macedonian question is revealed in the textbook of 1951[4]. The ethnogenesis of the Macedonian nation dates from 'after the wars', presumably the two world wars, when the events 'moulded the national consciousness of the Macedonians'. The Federal People's Republic of Macedonia is considered a political manoeuvre of the 'English-American' agents, namely the Titoists. It is maintained that the Macedonians enjoyed 'true freedom' only in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, while it is again stressed that 'Macedonia belongs to Macedonians'.[201] This absurd approach to the Macedonian question was due to Bulgarian international affairs after the Stalin-Titoist conflict. The concept of uncompromising recognition of a separate Macedonian nation had not yet disappeared, while the approach to Macedonians as original Bulgarians had not yet come into effect. In conclusion, national questions of the past were discussed and presented in a situation of contemporary, successively shifting politics, while being attributed Marxian denomination, as they were considered to be 'progressive' or 'reactionary'.

4.3.h *Bulgaria as a Semi-Colonial Country (Inter-War Years)*

In the so-called era of imperialist capitalism, Bulgaria, it was argued, was transformed into a semi-colony of Germany; the dynastic cliques and ruling classes that governed Bulgaria up to 9 September 1944 served German interests.[202] Since the late 19th century, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie had supported Great-Bulgarian chauvinist ideology in order to achieve the annexation of new lands to Bulgaria for economic

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[200] Some alterations of minor significance were made in the historical textbooks: the national movement in Bulgaria concerning the Macedonian question was explained in terms of Bulgarian sympathy for the enslaved Macedonians; the origin of the Miladinov brothers (educational, cultural, and social activists born in Struga, whose most significant work was a collection of folk songs) had to be declared as Macedonian; and the state of Samuel had to be described as a feudal formation comprised primarily of Slavs, in Bulgarian State Records Fund 142, Inventory 4, Archival Unit 7 (1947): 75.

[201] Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 211.

[202] Czar Ferdinand's statement when he left Bulgaria for Germany in 1918, that he ceaselessly served German interests, is pointed out, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 36 and 50–55. See, also, Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 92.

reasons.[203] To secure the success of her occupying plans, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie relied on the support of the dynasty and foreign Great Powers. Its dependence on them transformed the bourgeoisie into a foreign agent, serving foreign interests.

The aggressive aspirations of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie coincided with the imperial ambitions of Czar Ferdinand. At the same time, both were gripped by the vision of the San Stefano Bulgaria, which politicians and authors of the Party extolled as the only feasible solution to the Bulgarian national question. To realise such a vision Ferdinand raised a loan from Germany so that Bulgaria could refinance her army. This loan obliged Bulgaria to place orders with Austro-Hungarian and German firms, while handing raw material and resources to German companies.[204] Ferdinand's politics and methods were deemed, in essence, anti-national, since they differed from those of the BCP. The question is what the Party approaches towards the aggressive plans of Ferdinand, the bourgeoisie, and military circles for a large Bulgarian state would have been if these plans had been realised, given that high-ranking Party members (e.g. Poptomov) maintained that the San Stefano Treaty would have solved the Macedonian question,[205] and the BCP itself claimed the restoration of Western Thrace to Bulgaria.

Party scholars maintained that Ferdinand sought to expand his hegemony in the Balkans and render Bulgaria the outpost of the German and Austrian pervasion in the Middle East. By such politics, it was claimed, Ferdinand served the interests of Germany and Austria-Hungary which had nominated him Czar.[206] It was the Habsburg Empire that prompted its agents, Ferdinand and the pro-German quarters in Bulgaria, to dissolve the Balkan alliance in 1913 and to turn Bulgaria against the Serbs in a fratricidal war.[207] During the First World War, Germany commanded Bulgaria to attack Serbia—inasmuch as the German agent Czar Ferdinand determined the international affairs of the country.[208] These agents of German imperialism in Bulgaria, it was argued, were the perpetrators of two terrible national disasters (first, in the Balkan Wars, and second, in the First World War).

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[203] Vlahov (1947): 5.
[204] Glenny (1999): 337.
[205] BCP, Comintern (1998), vol. 2: 1132–1134.
[206] Vlahov (1947): 5–6.
[207] Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 7.
[208] Mitev (1945): 195.

As it is claimed that Ferdinand and the bourgeoisie subserviently backed the Central Powers, the idea that Ferdinand and his political circle intended to ally with the Central Powers by siding with the probable victor, is dismissed.[209] Ferdinand's genuine love for Bulgaria and his pursuit of Bulgarian national interests are by definition precluded due to his German origin and because the BCP categorically denied that there could be any other genuine patriotism apart from its own. As well as German imperialism, the intervention of other Western powers in Bulgarian affairs is also discussed. These powers supported the so-called monarchic-fascist dictatorship, whilst they strove against the Bulgarian people.[210] German imperialism prevailed since the Bulgarian Czar Boris and the Bulgarian bourgeoisie supported it. Consequently, Bulgaria joined the Axis. The historical apparatus of the BCP remembered to forget Boris's attempts to free Bulgaria from steadily tightening German economic fetters; Boris tried to persuade Britain and France to renew their economic contacts with Bulgaria, but in vain. Bulgaria's dependence on the German economy strengthened even more, when Bulgaria needed to buy war materials from Germany to build up the capability of her army. In conclusion, the official historiography of the BCP considered Bulgaria to be a dependent, semi-colonial state during the inter-war period. As Leninism had determined, semi-colonial countries required national-liberation movements. The resistance of the people during the inter-war period follows a course similar to that of the National Revival: insurrections, the setting up of revolutionary committees and armed detachments ('chetas').[211]

4.3.i *Second World War—Resistance Movement—9 September 1944*

Bulgarian history ends in the socialist era following the events of 9 September by glorifying socialism. 9 September and the establishment of the socialist regime is the epicentre of Bulgarian history. The long, linear advance of the Bulgarian nation culminates in the transition to socialism.

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[209] Stavrianos (2000[2]): 561 offers this interpretation. Ferdinand joined the Central Powers after the allies' failure in the Straits and the overwhelming defeats sustained by the Russians.

[210] In particular, the coup of 9 June 1923 and the suppression of the uprising of 23 September 1923 were ascribed to western imperialist intervention, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 68–71.

[211] Minkov (1947): 7.

The chapter on the Second World War in the historical schoolbooks reports a strong anti-fascist movement, but without giving any figures.[212] It is stressed that in no other country satellite to Germany was there such a mighty partisan movement as in Bulgaria.[213] In every textbook, it seems to be all-powerful, although there is clarification on some points, i.e. that it became successful after the Soviet victory over Hitler.[214]

"They [Rakovski, Benkovski, Levski, Botev, leaders of the uprising in 1918, Stamboliski and his fellows, fallen in the uprising of 1923 and terror in 1925, partisans and helpers of the resistance movement, fallen in the Fatherland War] vote for People's Republic", Bulgarian State Records, Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 223: 3.

[212] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 414 and Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 99. The former states that, by the end of 1944, "the whole country was full of armed groups, partisan detachments, battalions and brigades, which comprised the National Liberation Insurrectionary Army (NOVA)".

[213] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 421.

[214] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 92, 102.

The claim that the resistance movement was both massive and effective originated from the democratic beliefs of the Bulgarian nation as well as its sympathy for and devotion to the Russian people. For this reason, it is alleged that Bulgaria did not take part in war operations on the Eastern front, since the Bulgarian people vehemently refused to fight against their Slav big brother. The anti-fascist movement opposed consciously unified treacherous political rivals: dynasties and war governments.[215] The political and military representative of this movement was the Fatherland Front, 'a national, anti-Hitlerist organisation', whose aim was to struggle against foreign conquerors and their domestic agents.[216] The Fatherland Front is presented as the single patriotic tendency existing in Bulgaria during the Second World War. Everything that did not belong to the Fatherland Front coalition was pilloried as anti-national.

The BCP and Georgi Dimitrov are considered the most decisive factors in the evolution and development of the resistance movement. The Bulgarian people agreed with the initiative of the BCP; they recognised the necessity of establishing a unified political front, which would bring the country out of tremendous deadlock and save it from certain, horrible calamity; the Bulgarian nation realised the uprising of 9 September.[217] Thereby, the Bulgarian people were to be led to victory and salvation by the BCP and Dimitrov. On the whole, an uprising, which is considered as being realised by the nation, allowed the communists to take power. The BCP embodied national aspirations and pursuits.

The assistance of the Red Army and the decisive role played by the Soviet Union in the establishment of the Fatherland Front government is also stressed. The authors of the historical textbooks make some references to the Bulgarian peoples' welcome of the Soviet soldiers.[218]

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[215] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 414–420.

[216] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 94.

[217] Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 99–102, Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 427–429, Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 261–264. The historical narration of the resistance movement is embellished with Party recommendations and resolutions as well as excerpts of Dimitrov's discourse. Thus, the authors give the impression that Dimitrov and the BCP directed events. On the other hand, they attempt to show that the nation took on the resistance and the uprising. As a result, Dimitrov and the BCP are configured as the genuine political embodiment of the Bulgarian nation.

[218] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 430–431 and Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 263–264.

The contribution of the Soviet Union to the liberation of Bulgaria from the German fascist yoke is compared with the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878, when the liberation of Bulgaria was also due to the Russian army.[219]

The Fatherland Front and the BCP are supposed to carry out their role as national redeemer after 9 September as well. Thus Bulgaria took part in the war against Germany, which enhanced her status before the Peace Conference. Moreover, they prevented 'English-Americans' from intervening, to occupy or slaughter the country.[220] The role of communists is thus made prominent and the international adherence of Bulgaria to the Soviet camp is justified.

As Orwell aptly put it, "who controls the past, controls the future; who controls the present, controls the past". Bulgarian communists manipulated history-writing and the single obligatory historical textbook in order to legitimise their regime. Their main claims were that the communist regime was the peak in the long, linear course of Bulgarian history and that they had realised unfulfilled aims of the Bulgarian Renaissance and national liberation movement. Furthermore, they chose to adopt a monolithic view of the past so that all alternatives would be de-legitimised. The Soviet experiment was taken into account despite its several shifts, while non-communist academic cadres joined the historical apparatus of the BCP.

As a plethora of examples show, 'workers of the historical front' opted for a kind of 'Marxist nationalism', that is, a serious proximity to nationalism paying deference to Marxist methodological schemas. The outline of the most significant topics of the imagination of the past with national criteria demonstrates tendencies of remembering and forgetting, overestimating some events and overlooking others, and manipulation of the past for short-term political considerations.

Alongside the reinvention of the nation and the reconstruction of the national narrative, Bulgarian communists were also redefining the character, role, and historic mission of their party. Their party had now become patriotic, if not nationalist, and had epitomised the agency, which led historical development to its preconceived end goal, which

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[219] Rabotnichesko Delo #141, 03.03.1945.

[220] Bozhikov, Burmov and Kyurkchiev (1946): 430–431, Burmov, Dikovski, Bliznev and Hristov (1950[5]): 98, Bozhikov, Kosev, Lambrev, Mitev, Topalov and Hristov (1949): 120–123, Bozhikov, Burmov and Lambrev (1951[4]): 283–284.

had already been prescribed by Marxist teleology; that is, socialism. The Bulgarian nation was presented as a primordial organic entity; following a rather ethno-symbolist schema, communist intellectuals narrated the historical process of the nation towards its peak, that is, socialism, via socio-economic forms completely identified with certain courses of national Bulgarian history.

The most interesting area to be capitalised on by communist intellectuals was that of the national liberation movement. As a new historical narrative emerged, deprived of the so-called falsifications of fascist and chauvinist intellectuals of the old regime, the communists were presented as the heirs and successors to the ideas and political projects of leaders of the national movement of the 19th century. It was argued that the communists achieved the national independence of Bulgaria, the unity of all Slavs, and democratic ideals through the establishment of the People's Republic, and instigated punishment of the classes, who had traditionally played a treacherous role against the national interests of Bulgaria.

Now that the national discourse of the BCP has been shown through the exploration of texts, we will finish by demonstrating the national discourse of the BCP by exploring events and symbols strongly related to nationalism: namely, commemorations, anniversaries, and national symbols.

CHAPTER FIVE

FLAGGING NATIONHOOD: EVENTS AND SYMBOLS[1]

Commemorations and national anniversaries are occasions when nationhood is flagged. National anniversaries are celebrated with ceremonial pomp according to specific formalities; they follow a specific ceremonial path and use specific means of celebration; they constitute national holidays, with people suspending their ordinary routine to show devotion to the nation; and they are repeated every year at the same day, becoming a specific part of the annual calendar. In this way, the national past is recurrently 'relived'[2] in manner which can allow certain aspects of it to be selectively 'remembered' or 'forgotten'. As Nora states:

> …it is the *present* that creates the instruments of commemoration and seeks out dates and figures to commemorate, ignoring some and inventing others; sometimes artificially manipulating dates and sometimes altering the significance of given dates.[3]

As the national past is annually reconstructed, a sense of nationally-shared continuous progress is evoked—beginning in harsh times gone by, passing through a blossoming present, and leading to a glorious future.

During the early post-war years (1944–1948), the newly established communist regimes in Eastern Europe honoured figures and events from their respective national pasts, and celebrated holidays dedicated to anti-fascist resistance and popular uprisings, which they presented as forerunners of the new, bright and prosperous 'democratic' era. Hungarian communists celebrated 15 March and commemorated 6 October, both recalling the national struggle for independence in 1848; they celebrated a martyr cult of fallen communists presented as national heroes, and 'nationalized' socialist holidays, such as May Day.

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[1] An earlier version of part of this chapter has appeared in *Nationalities Papers* 37 (4), 2009, pp. 425–442 and has been published in *The Communist Quest for National Legitimacy in Europe, 1918–1989*, ed. by Martin Mevius (Routledge, 2010).

[2] Amalvi (1998).

[3] Nora (1998): 618.

In the centenary of 1848 they linked national with social demands.[4] In the 'struggle for the soul of the nation', Czech communists also extensively celebrated anniversaries and centenaries, especially in 1948, which saw the 600th anniversary of the founding of Prague's Charles University, the 100th anniversaries of the first All-Slav Congress (held in Prague) and the revolution of 1848, the 30th anniversary of the founding of an independent Czechoslovakia, and the 10th anniversary of the Munich Accords.[5] National holidays related to anti-fascist resistance movements were celebrated in Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia; dates related to the overthrow of fascism, implying the transition to the new era, were celebrated in Romania, Albania, and Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian communists and the communist-led Fatherland Front government honoured, contrived and interpreted specific national dates and figures, producing national identities during the course of the celebrations. By this means, the BCP manipulated national anniversaries and commemorations for its own political purposes, i.e. the reshaping of collective memory and the gaining of political consensus. As the Bulgarian nation, which the Fatherland Front claimed that it led and represented, was celebrated through national celebrations, the BCP attempted to secure conformity, consensus, unity and continuity by attributing a meaning serving regime political aspirations and plans to these holidays. Thus, the sense of national days, the history related to them, and future goals were all determined in line with communist considerations; securing conformity would implant official regime discourses into the masses. As a result, communist aims were articulated as national ones.

Using anniversaries and commemorations, centenaries and millennial celebrations, the BCP attempted to recast and develop an apparently new version of Bulgarian national identity with respect to the interests of the new regime, and inculcate it in the masses. Through ceremonies celebrating the nation, a past event could either be interpreted within a new historical context or the undesirable aspects of it could be consigned to oblivion. Thus, the Fatherland Front, as the holder of political power in early post-war Bulgaria, involved itself in an extensive process of selective remembering and forgetting. The national discourse of the BCP, as articulated during commemorations and anniversaries, can be detected in Party instructions, resolutions

[4] Mevius (2005): 99–100 and 191–198.
[5] Abrams (2004): 98.

and directives, governmental decisions, school circulars, and newspaper articles, leaflets and books.

5.1 *Celebrating the Bulgarian Nation in the Late 1940s*

Celebrating a national anniversary was a frequent phenomenon in the post-war public life of Bulgaria. The Agitation and Propaganda Section of the Central Committee of the BCP and the National Committee of the Fatherland Front often called on the Bulgarian people to celebrate commemorative events.[6] They issued directives and circulars in order to mould and supervise these solemn national celebrations. On the occasion of each national anniversary and commemoration, a central committee set up by the Fatherland Front supervised public events and controlled a network of committees all over the country.[7] The fundamental role of these committees was to ensure the overwhelming, nation-wide participation of all local communities in national celebration, while at the same time inciting the patriotic emotions of the masses.[8] Thus, the BCP envisaged each national celebration as a visible, active embodiment of officially proclaimed values, which individuals were to internalise through participation in carefully organised community celebrations.

Up to a week of preparation and political agitation was planning to precede the main celebration. During that period, a range of conferences, lectures, literary and cultural events and commemorative mornings and evenings took place in neighbourhoods, factories, faculties, schools, theatres, cultural clubs and military camps. On these occasions, the national anthem, anthems of 'friendly nations' and suitably patriotic melodies were sung.[9] The national holiday committees

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[6] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15.

[7] A considerable number of records show evidence of this. See, for instance, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 531 (1948): 24 on the 9th September, BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 102 (1946): 1 on the 24th May and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 169 (1947): 1 on the 19th February.

[8] Rabotnichesko Delo #200, 12.05.1945: "All the Bulgarian people must take part in the ceremony of education", Rabotnichesko Delo #205, 04.09.1947: "Activists of the Fatherland Front…must work night and day…to be sure that there is no citizen who has not been excited from the patriotic flame of the victory of the 9th September 1944", and Rabotnichesko Delo #101, 30.04.1948: "No Bulgarian citizen, who loves his people and country, must be absent from the 1st May manifestation".

[9] Bulgarian State Records Fund 21, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 434: 86, 87, 93–94, 119.

prepared the conditions for a successful celebration and interpreted the qualities of the commemorative events,[10] following instructions and directives given by the national holiday central committee and the BCP.[11] During this period of agitation and propaganda, the theses of the Bulgarian communists would be disseminated among the masses in cities and villages.

The most significant event on national holidays was the parade (albeit parades did not take place on all national holidays). Parades were an old tradition, which acquired new forms in the socialist regime. On Bulgarian national holidays parades were held in Sofia in an area bordered by the church of Alexander Nievski, the 'Czar Liberator' statue of the Russian Czar Alexander II and the parliamentary building. National and red flags were brandished alike.[12] The state also tried to add as much awe and wonder as possible to the spectacle by mass mobilisation, pageantry and show. Ritual and spectacle contributed to develop national pride, to construct national identity and to inculcate loyalty.

At some national parades, the army demonstrated the military might and the pride and alertness of the Bulgarian nation. In others, students, pupils, youths, teachers and scholars celebrated education and promised a prosperous future for the nation.[13] Partisans also participated in parades; they recalled the resistance movement and the national strategy of the BCP in the Second World War. Working people, peasants, and the 'Septemvrists' were also present in parades. Shock workers and the outstanding students were considered a source of national pride for Bulgaria, and led the working and educational groups they belonged to. Representatives of almost all parts of the nation thus passed before the tribunal of leading figures of the BCP and the Fatherland Front.

Veterans of the so-called saga of the battle of Shipka, the resistance movement and the Fatherland War participated in ceremonies on national days. Their presence aimed to recall the struggles of the Bul-

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[10] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 170 (1947): 43–45.

[11] See the very revealing BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 170 (1947): 10–11 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 169 (1947): 2–3.

[12] Rabotnichesko Delo #209, 08.09.1947.

[13] For analytical reports on parades see Otechestven Front #1238, 11.09.1948 and Rabotnichesko Delo #209, 08.09.1947 about 9th September, Rabotnichesko Delo #101, 30.04.1948 about 1st May and Rabotnichesko Delo #122, 26.05.1948 about 24th May.

garian nation against foreign oppression and to link the national liberation movement of the 19th century with the resistance movement of the Second World War. In that way, the BCP attributed a national character to the resistance movement and its own wartime activities. The veterans of the battle of Shipka were honoured on 19 February (the anniversary of Levski's hanging in 1873), 3 March (the day of liberation from the Turkish yoke) and 9 September (the day of transition from capitalism to socialism).

Bunting,[14] including flags, portraits, placards, posters, decorative banners and greenery were placed in public spaces. The national tricolour, definitely the most prominent one, was accompanied by flags of domestic political and working organisations (e.g. trade union flags) as well as the national flags of 'friendly nations' (for instance the flag of the Soviet Union).[15] Although the portraits of Stalin, Dimitrov and Tito predominated, participants also carried portraits of Bulgarian national heroes. These were also displayed in streets, squares and on buildings, and decorated the tribunal of the leading figures of the BCP and the Fatherland Front.[16] Through the representation of Bulgarian national heroes and contemporary political personalities in a chain of equivalence,[17] the BCP attempted to legitimise communist politics on national grounds by demonstrating the continuity of the nation's past and present. Placards, posters, decorative banners and diagrams also constituted a propaganda tool for the Fatherland Front in order to sell its achievements and to gain the consent of the masses. Using public decorations the Fatherland Front also propagated the main political topics of each national holiday such as elimination of the opposition, economic plans or the increase in productivity.

Though secondary in importance compared to the above, national holidays also saw the laying of wreaths as well as pilgrimages to important locations. Representatives of the government laid wreaths at monuments. Pilgrimages took place to graves of and monuments to fallen partisans. Both were appropriately decorated for the occasion. In this manner, the Fatherland Front attempted to establish itself as the official

[14] For this issue see BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 531 (1948): 25, 28 about the 9th September.

[15] Otechestven Front #1235, 07.09.1948.

[16] Otechestven Front #1238, 11.09.1948.

[17] As A.M. Smith (1998): 89 points out, in a chain of equivalence, different subject positions could be symbolically located together and, at the same time, preserve their differences.

holder of the memory of the resistance and the war dead. Communists portrayed the fallen partisan and the Unknown Soldier[18] as national heroes, who sacrificed themselves for fatherland and democracy.

Centenaries and millennial commemorations were celebrated with a nationalist content. Even though the BCP did not find itself in the same exceptional position as the MKP, which had the opportunity to highlight links of the communist present with the most glorious page of Hungarian history by virtue of the year-lay celebrations of the centenary of 1848,[19] the Bulgarian communists arranged a set of events on the occasion of the centenaries of the birthday of Hristo Botev and the Bulgarian national poet Ivan Vazov as well as of the millennial commemoration of the first Bulgarian hermit Ivan Rilski.[20] A number of activities were arranged on the occasion of such centenaries. For the centenary of Botev's birth, the government, on the recommendation of the AgitProp, announced the setting up of an exhibition. Competitions were arranged for the creation of bust, portrait, and cards depicting him and the composition of music to accompany his poems. The authorities established Botev monuments in Sofia, Vracha and Kalofer, and commissioned a bibliography and biography. Schools and cultural clubs dedicated special weeks to Botev's life-work, and some important social institutions were renamed 'Hristo Botev'.[21] On the 7th January 1949, the centenary of his birthday was brilliantly and honourably celebrated.[22]

We can divide national anniversaries and commemorations celebrated under the supervision of the BCP during this period into three categories:

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[18] Tombs of unknown soldiers imply the paradox of "remembering everyone by remembering no one in particular", in Gillis (1994): 11. The anonymity and the symbolic character of the 'Unknown Soldier' promote the sense that all soldiers of a specific war died for the same purposes, under the same conditions and fighting with the same stimulation for fatherland. On politics about the Unknown Soldier see Gorman (1994): 307–314. The Bulgarian communists were influenced by the Soviet Union, which after the Second World War encouraged the cult of the dead on a mass scale, Gillis (1994): 12.

[19] For details on these celebrations see Mevius (2005): 221 and 255.

[20] For details see BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 374 (1949) and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 692 (1949) on Ivan Vazov's centenary; BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 113 (1946) on Ivan Rilski's millennium; and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 531 on Botev's centenary.

[21] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 531 (1948): 45.

[22] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 568 (1949): 14–17.

a. those of plainly national character,
b. those of national and international character, and
c. those of a largely socialist character.

During this period, the significance of anniversaries of plainly national character diminished to some degree, with correspondingly greater emphasis, in terms of ceremonial pomp, being given to anniversaries of a largely socialist character. Nonetheless, the latter gained an extensively national character and involved a systematic national discourse.[23] The Bulgarian population was already familiar with the first two categories, since they consisted of old celebrations. The third category included an old celebration previously celebrated only by the political left, and a totally new, socialist festivity.

5.2 *Anniversaries and Commemorations of Plainly National Character*

3 March (Day of National Liberation from the Turkish yoke). The Fatherland Front decided to commemorate the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano as the day of Bulgaria's liberation from the Turkish yoke.[24] The Treaty anticipated the establishment of a significantly extended Bulgaria, from the Danube to the Aegean Sea and from the Black Sea to Korche. This date was opted for instead of that of the April Uprising, that is, the most significant but unsuccessful uprising in Bulgarian history against Ottoman rule, which attempted to found an independent Bulgarian state and was the *casus-beli* for the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–8. The Fatherland Front could in theory also have opted for the Congress of Berlin, which amended the Treaty of San Stefano at the expense of Bulgaria[25] but gave international recognition to the newly established Bulgarian state. The BCP had a preference for the commemoration of the signing of a short-lived international treaty with irredentist overtones, most likely because the previous regime had

[23] On the merging of national and socialist content of holidays regarding the case of the MKP see Mevius (2005): 255–259.

[24] Up to 1946 this day used to be celebrated as a National Holiday; later on, it lost its major significance, while the communist regime continued to commemorate it.

[25] The Congress of Berlin considerably reduced the territory of the Bulgarian state and it divided Bulgaria into two parts (the Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Principality of Eastern Rumelia).

also celebrated San-Stefano. The Fatherland Front could not simply ignore half a century of nationalist discourse involving a 'syndrome of national loss and shrinkage', the pining 'for unredeemed lands' and national outrage against international injustices against Bulgaria. At the same time, celebrating 3 March justified the contemporary Fatherland Front claims on an outlet to the Aegean Sea and the annexation of Western Thrace to Bulgaria.[26]

On the occasion of the anniversary of 3 March, the BCP highlighted the supposed unity of the Southern Slavs against the common occupier of their lands, the Ottoman Turks, and the contribution of the Russian people to the liberation of the Balkan Slavs from a foreign yoke. Russia was celebrated for having imposed the San Stefano Treaty on Turkey, which was considered by the Bulgarian communists as an ideal solution to the Macedonian question in particular. The Germans, by contrast, were presented as the 'eternal enemy of all Slav peoples', and were blamed for the revision of the treaty at the expense of Bulgaria at the Congress of Berlin.[27]

Imaginary links, based on the schema 'as then, so now', were drawn between the national liberation of Bulgaria from the Turks and the Second World War. As in 1878, when the Germans had attempted first to divide and then to rule the Slavs, so during the Second World War the Germans attempted to subjugate them. Just as then, the Slavs, united under the Russian leadership, had defeated the Turks, so now, under the Soviet leadership, they defeated their common enemy, i.e. the Germans. Just as in 1878 the Russian Army had then substantially contributed to Bulgaria's liberation from a foreign yoke so now the Red Army did likewise.[28] This schematic overview was openly argued at the First Slav Congress which convened in Sofia on the occasion of the anniversary of 3 March 1945. 3 March ceased to be celebrated as a national holiday from 1947 and lost its significance, as it called to mind the chauvinist tradition of 'Great Bulgaria of San Stefano', which was denounced as unpatriotic.

2 June (Botev day and the commemoration of the fallen heroes in the resistance movement and the Fatherland War). This day com-

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[26] Kolarov presented this demand before the Peace Conference of Paris in 1946, *Bulgaria before the Peace Conference* (1946): 16. See, also, *Bulgaria Claims Western Thrace* (1946): 4 and 8.

[27] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945): 7.

[28] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 27 (1945).

memorated the death of Botev and most of the guerrillas of his group in the Vracha mountains. It was an old tradition for the BCP itself. From the 1920s, the Party proclaimed 2 June as the Remembrance Day of Botev's death[29]. The BCP took advantage of the fact that Botev was a recognised national hero and an ardent socialist in order to draw links between:

a. nationalism and socialism,
b. patriotism and internationalism,[30]
c the fall of Botev's group and the partisans and
d. the national liberation movement and resistance movement.[31]

To prove these links, the Party resorted to a strategy of selective remembering and forgetting. Cast into oblivion were Botev's communitarian or even anarchist views,[32] such as his belief that the chief enemy of people was their government.[33] In spite of these views, some of his aphorisms such as "who falls in the struggle for freedom never dies", inscribed on monuments erected after Botev's death, were seen to perfectly suit the communist project to connect Botev's revolutionary group with fallen partisans. It was emphasised that both had self-sacrificed for the fatherland. It was no accident that the BCP celebrated fallen partisans on this national holiday.

On Botev Day[34] a pilgrimage was organised to the place of Botev's death in the Vracha mountains. As Rabotnichesko Delo[35] reported, thousands of pilgrims departed for a march amidst the sounds of gunfire, church bells and military bugles, singing Botev's revolutionary poems and carrying flags and placards. It had a double symbolism: first, thousands of pilgrims were supposed to retrace the footsteps of Botev and his guerrillas and, second, they would march to the mountains

[29] In 1929 a march against fascism inspired by Botev's memory was dispersed and many students arrested, Grigorov (1963): 63–71.
[30] Rabotnichesko Delo #118, 21.05.1948 and #128, 02.06.1948.
[31] As Pavlov pointed out in his speech in the Naroden Theatre on the 2nd June 1945, "Hristo Botev bridges the glorious time of the Renaissance and the Fatherland Front Bulgaria", in Rabotnichesko Delo #218, 04.06.1945.
[32] Blagoev (1985): 213–215 considers Botev as a Proudhonian anarchist. See, also, Natan (1945–1946): 296–997. Botev, as a symbolic figure, was appropriated by the anarchists as well; the youth anarchist-communist organisation was called 'Hristo Botev', BCP Records Fund 272, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 90 (1946).
[33] Zarev (1946): 129.
[34] Rabotnichesko Delo #217, 02.06.1945 and #118, 21.05.1948.
[35] Rabotnichesko Delo #217, 02.06.1945.

where a few years previously partisans had fought for Botev's ideals. An imaginary link was thus drawn between Botev's legend and the resistance movement.

19 February (the anniversary of Levski's hanging). The Party, as it did in the case of Botev, had recourse to one other traditionally commemorative figure of an uncontested national hero, using this date of commemoration to claim that the Fatherland Front was the natural successor to the Bulgarian renaissance and the national liberation movement of the previous century. In his speech on the occasion of the anniversary of Levski's death in 1946, Chervenkov argued that the Fatherland Front represented the same pure patriotism of the people as Levski had done long ago.[36] The partisans of the Second World War and the Fatherland Front activists of the post-war period were presented as the original descendants of Levski. The former had proved it by their devotion to the fatherland during the resistance movement, while the latter had to prove it by fulfilling their day-to-day duties.[37] The Bulgarian communists stressed that the Fatherland Front had followed in the revolutionary tradition and had realised all of Levski's visions and ideals: the People's Republic; the national independence for Bulgaria; equality and fraternity between all nationalities inside Bulgaria; and, most importantly, fraternity amongst the Southern Slavs.[38]

A particular set of Levski's views and deeds were highlighted in order to claim communist identification with him. It was argued that Levski was the first to have recognised the practical and political significance of organisation, leadership and of the necessity of centralism for the success of a people's revolution. Furthermore, it was argued, Levski's legacy suggested that not only foreign tyrants but also their agents, lackeys and spies should be punished without mercy.[39] Such arguments were used to justify the show trials held against the opposition. In that way, a national hero, whose ideas and qualities could be identified with that of the BCP, was configured. The anniversary of Levski's death was also used to gain support for other topical politi-

[36] Rabotnichesko Delo #34, 16.02.1946.

[37] Rabotnichesko Delo #124, 12.02.1945 and #130, 19.02.1945.

[38] Rabotnichesko Delo #130, 19.02.1945. See, also, the slogan of the AgitProp 'Long Life to the Fatherland Front—the successor of Levski's legacy'.

[39] Rabotnichesko Delo #124, 12.02.1945, #130, 19.02.1945 and #34, 16.02.1946. See, also, Chervenkov's speech where spies and lackeys of pashas in Levski's time are identified with factions around monarchy and reaction in the early post-war, in Rabotnichesko Delo #36, 19.02.1946.

cal issues. At this commemoration in 1945, the BCP underlined that respect for Levski's legacy meant, in practice, supporting the Fatherland Front and its government, acting for the victorious end of the Fatherland War, subscribing to the Liberty Loan, encouraging political proximity to Yugoslavia and eternal fraternity with the Russian people—Bulgaria's liberator.[40]

5.3 *Anniversaries and Commemorations of National and International Character*

24 May (the Day of Cyril and Methodius). After 1944, the religious elements disappeared from this celebration. At the national level, the emphasis lay instead on education, culture, youth, the spring and flowers.[41] The importance of education, schooling and the intelligentsia in Fatherland Front Bulgaria was highlighted and contrasted with the illiteracy that had dominated Bulgarian society in the past.[42] Besides these topical issues, the historical myth of the civilising messianic mission of Bulgarians among the Slavs was disseminated. As Chervenkov pointed out, "the Slav script had firstly developed in Bulgaria, and was later disseminated in Russia".[43] This celebration was supposed to excite a sense of shared pride among Bulgarians, since their country was considered to be the cradle of Slav literature and culture. The Bulgarian people celebrated Cyril and Methodius as Slav heroes with a Bulgarian origin who had greatly contributed to the common Slav civilisation.

Despite their contribution to Slav languages and culture in general, the AgitProp stressed their contribution to the Bulgarian nation in particular. Not only had Bulgarians avoided assimilation and disappearance during long periods of slavery, but also discovered their national identity thanks to Cyril and Methodius.[44] During the war, the Bulgarian government had attempted to underline the Hun origins of the Bulgarian nation. This gave the Bulgarian communists the opportunity to attack the governments of the Second World War and Czar Boris as 'anti-national'. The BCP accused them of planning to forbid the holiday of Cyril and Methodius and desiring to 'Germanize'

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[40] Rabotnichesko Delo #130, 19.02.1945.
[41] Rabotnichesko Delo #202, 15.05.1945 and #203, 16.05.1945.
[42] Rabotnichesko Delo #122, 26.05.1948.
[43] Chervenkov (1945): 32–34.
[44] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 102 (1946): 6.

Bulgaria.[45] The BCP further charged that 'German agents' had planned to abolish the Cyrillic script and replace it with the Latin one.[46]

At an international level, as happened in other Slav countries, Slav culture,[47] Pan-Slav unity and solidarity and, above all, fraternity with the Soviet Union were celebrated and propagated.[48] The nation commemorated its international membership of the family of Slav nations and its adherence to the Eastern Socialist bloc, led by the Soviet Union. The rivalry between the Slavs and the Teutonic race was highlighted with reference to two historical events: first, Germans opposition to the Slav enlightening mission of the two brothers during the time of Cyril and Methodius;[49] and second, during the Second World War when Slavs had fought against German imperialist expansionism. This project was accompanied by a significant forgetting: first, the fact that the Glagolitic alphabet had been invented by Cyril and Methodius in Moravia and not in Bulgaria; second, that the Bulgarian Czar Boris I had turned firstly to Germany in order to secure the adoption of Christianity by his people.

5.4 *Anniversaries and Commemorations of a Largely Socialist Character*

9 September (the 'transition day'). This date symbolised a '*date of passage*' from fascism to socialism; from a long, humiliating, bloody and devastating fascist, imperialist German yoke[50] to the so-called "free, independent, democratic and powerful Bulgaria";[51] from a series of anti-national, treacherous governments (who were seen as the lackeys of foreign imperialists), to the patriotic government of the Fatherland

[45] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 36 (1945): 2 and 5–6 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 102 (1946): 7.

[46] Rabotnichesko Delo #121, 24.05.1948.

[47] In BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 10 (1945): 1 the day of Cyril and Methodius is also called a day of Pan-Slav culture.

[48] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 36 (1945): 1 and Otechestven Front #523, 21.05.1946.

[49] Karakostov (1945): 7.

[50] Rabotnichesko Delo #301, 08.09.1945, #296, 04.09.1945 and #209, 08.09.1947.

[51] The last adjective of this slogan was not permanent. It could be altered to 'prosperous', 'wealthy' and so on. For slogans of the BCP on the 9th September see BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 36 (1945): 7–8.

Front.[52] On 9 September 1944, it was claimed, Bulgaria escaped a certain tremendous national disaster and regained her international reputation by shifting her wartime alliance from the Nazis to the Allies.[53] Besides this emphasis on systemic change it was a national holiday and a commemoration of a glorious, national uprising, which brought Bulgaria freedom, independence and the certainty of prosperity.

The 9 September became the greatest national holiday of the post-war years,[54] since it constituted the founding myth of the new regime and a temporal milestone for the Bulgarian communists. It created a cult of a new beginning. Despite its novelty, 9 September could be placed in a long, revolutionary and insurrectionary tradition.[55] The achievements of the 9th September had, the communists argued, been anticipated since the national liberation movement of the 19th century, and similar significance was attached to the insurrection of Radomir (1918), the uprising of 1923 and the People's Bloc of 1931.[56] Since the entire Bulgarian people were supposed to have supported all these uprisings, 9 September acquired a national dimension. Applying the logic of equivalence and stressing the continuity between past and present, the 'victory of the people', as the uprising of 9 September was called, was supposed to be the culmination of a long national revolutionary tradition.

Within this symbolical framework, the substantial contribution of the Red Army and the Soviet Union to the 9 September Uprising was downplayed, to underline the independence of the BCP. At the same time it was not totally forgotten, as it was an opportunity to present the USSR in a positive light. It was argued that, for the second time in history, the Russian people had contributed to the national liberation of their brother Slavs, for the first time in 1878, and now again in 1944. Several slogans of 9 September celebrations concerned the Red Army and the generalissimo Stalin. At the same time, honour was paid

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[52] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 36 (1945): 7, Rabotnichesko Delo #301, 08.09.1945 and #209, 08.09.1947.

[53] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 36 (1945): 7, Rabotnichesko Delo #301, 08.09.1945 and #209, 08.09.1947.

[54] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 170 (1947): 41 and Rabotnichesko Delo #296, 04.09.1945.

[55] See for instance Rabotnichesko Delo # 204, 03.09.1947. See Amalvi (1994): 133 about a similar concept regarding the link between the Bastille Day and the Third Republic.

[56] Recited by Chervenkov in a historical report on the occasion of the national holiday of 9th September as revolutionary forerunners of 9th September, in Rabotnichesko Delo #210, 09.09.1947.

to the partisans and the soldiers who had fallen during the resistance movement and the Fatherland War.[57] They represented martyrs to the realisation of the September Uprising and, thereby, the new Bulgaria.

The day was meant to represent the patriotic unity of the Bulgarian people.[58] According to the Rabotnichesko Delo, the official newspaper of the BCP, all social strata (the working people, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, the army, the police, and the patriotic merchants and industrialists) were to be rallied around the tricolour flag of the Fatherland Front,[59] that is, the national Bulgarian flag. Rabotnichesko Delo also argued that the 9 September "should stimulate emotions of pride in any honest Bulgarian, in any Bulgarian patriot, for the collapse of tyranny, savagery and fascism";[60] it ought to be regarded as a "precious day for every honest Bulgarian heart, for every Bulgarian patriot".[61] Consequently, anyone who did not celebrate 9 September was not a true and honest patriot or a true and honest Bulgarian. To be an enemy of 9 September, that is, of the communist power, was to be an enemy of the nation.

The main themes on 9 September were national liberty, people's democracy and people's power, bravery and victory.[62] After 1946, the same day became a celebration of the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the People's Republic.[63] From 1947, the Narodna Army and Narodna Militia celebrated the same day as their own holiday. The anniversary of 9 September also represented a chance for the Fatherland Front government to present its achievements and argue

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[57] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 170 (1947): 42 and BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 6, Archival Unit 531 (1948): 26–27.

[58] "When the narod was united and firmly rallied round a given national idea [e.g. the national liberation movement, the resistance movement], it coped with domestic and foreign enemies [e.g. the Ottomans, the Germans, and the divisive opposition]", in Rabotnichesko Delo #207, 06.09.1947.

[59] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 36 (1945): 7, Rabotnichesko Delo #302, 10.09.1945 and #209, 08.09.1947.

[60] Rabotnichesko Delo #301, 08.09.1945.

[61] Rabotnichesko Delo #204, 03.09.1947. In Rabotnichesko Delo #211, 11.09.1947, the following excerpt is quoted: "The working people demonstrated its great achievements in terms of productivity, the peasants expressed their pleasure in the collection of harvests and to secure bread, the Narodna army manifested its alertness to safeguard the country's integrity and all the people demonstrated their national pride".

[62] Rabotnichesko Delo #209, 08.09.1947.

[63] See, for instance, the title of an article in Rabotnichesko Delo #207, 06.09.1947: *Third Anniversary of 9th September and One Year from the Establishment of the People's Republic*.

for an increase in productivity and the realisation of the Economic Plan.[64]

1 May (May Day). May Day had already acquired the character of a day of protest long before 1944.[65] As the BCP, considered to be the vanguard of the Bulgarian proletariat, seized power, the political message of May Day was greatly modified, acquiring *inter alia* significant national characteristics. As a result, the international 'Chicago martyrs' and working class struggles were omitted or forgotten and replaced by slogans on patriotic unity, on modernisation, and on promises for a prosperous future of Bulgaria. At the suggestion of Dimitrov, May Day was to represent the patriotic unity of all social strata of Bulgarian society under the flag of the Fatherland Front.[66] This theme appeared on a sculptural figure established in central Sofia on the occasion of May Day 1946, which stood for unity between the working people, the peasants and the intelligentsia.[67] The same notion was presented on a poster for May Day 1945, which depicted an image of a soldier, a worker, a peasant, and an intellectual accompanied with the slogan 'Long Life to the 1st May'.[68] Besides these representations of national unity, there were slogans and messages expressing gratitude to all the Slavs, the Soviet Union, and Stalin, who were all presented as great national friends of Bulgaria.[69]

May Day was used to demonstrate and celebrate the modernisation of the Bulgarian state. All social strata were asked to work hard and exceed labour norms in order to increase productivity, and successfully fulfill the Economic Plans,[70] achieve the technological and

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[64] Rabotnichesko Delo #204, 03.09.1947 and #205, 04.09.1947.

[65] Hobsbawm (1983): 283 ff gives an analytical historical account of the symbolism of May Day in the period of 1870–1914.

[66] As Dimitrov himself characterised it in one of his speeches, Rabotnichesko Delo # 96, 02.05.1946. For the same topic see also Rabotnichesko Delo # 101, 30.04.1948.

[67] See a photo of it in Rabotnichesko Delo # 93, 27.04.1946.

[68] Rabotnichesko Delo # 191, 30.04.1945.

[69] BCP Records Fund 1, Inventory 15, Archival Unit 170 (1947): 24, 33–36, Rabotnichesko Delo # 30, 30.04.1946 and #94, 22.04.1948. See, also, the speech of Dimitrov in the Naroden (national-people's) Theatre on the 30th April 1946, in Rabotnichesko Delo # 96, 02.05.1946.

[70] Some of May Day slogans with such content fall under the Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 414: 'Railway workers, speed up your work for safe and regular transport service' (p. 12); 'Implementation of Two Years Plan will reinforce democratic rights and freedoms of the Bulgarian people' (p. 30); 'Intellectuals, work for the grandeur of the fatherland and for development of national economy' (p. 32); and 'Youth, be shock workers' (p. 35).

financial advance of the country as a matter of national pride,[71] and preserve, with all their strength, national freedom and independence.[72] May Day was no longer a protest for better working conditions but a promise that hard work would bring prosperity, development and the modernisation of Bulgaria.

5.5 *National Symbols*

A nation, defined as an imagined community by Anderson (1991), is ratified by a range of symbols with the most value-laden of them being flags and emblems with their symbolic function as a 'condensation symbol'[73] of national independence, national identity and sovereignty, national history and culture, and emotions of respect and loyalty. In themselves, they help forge and intensify national solidarity, cohesion, devotion and consent.

A national flag, a very specific piece of cloth, represents a nation, an abstract notion with tangible boundaries. Furthermore, a flag as a material object becomes in itself an object of sentiment, which is transferred from the notion represented. Flags are assigned to a complete and highly important behavioural focus; they are treated as a secular sacred object, a modern counterpart of an ancient clan's totem or holy Christian image depicting a saint. Despite its own universality, a flag indicates particularity, with its own individual patterns. Individual patterns of flags proclaim national virtues and qualities, always of a positive, morally approved content. The national flag always, waved or not, recalls a glorious past.

It is argued that the emblem has a long history, whilst the national flag is a historically recent innovation. The emblem can also be the embodiment of a crucial historical event. Every nation has its own unique emblem, even though the main feature or a part of the whole emblem could be used by another nation. It is possible to add or remove connotations from the emblem or a part of it, depending on contemporary political considerations, i.e. the red star of the Bulgarian flag would imply Bulgaria's belonging to the socialist bloc.

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[71] Similarly, the shock workers were considered Bulgaria's national pride, Rabotnichesko Delo # 102, 01.05.1948.

[72] Rabotnichesko Delo # 101, 30.04.1948.

[73] Firth (1973): 356.

Such national symbols can be reworked when a nation is in transition.[74] Thus, the Fatherland Front modified them, when Bulgaria entered the socialist era, opting to introduce both national and socialist features to the main national symbols. The BCP used the national symbols to show its own image of the nation. Its own nationalism is depicted by on the Bulgarian national symbols.

5.5.a *The National Emblem*

In the Constitution of 1947,[75] Bulgaria adopted the rampant lion as the main state emblem, which had been instituted since the Tirnovo Constitution, the first Constitution of the Bulgarian national state, in 1878. However, the lion ceased to be depicted as crowned, since the monarchy had been abolished by the plebiscite of September 8, 1946. An azure-blue field replaced the dark-red field. New elements emerged in the emblem: ears of wheat surrounded the lion on both sides, a five-pointed star instead of a crown, a cog-wheel and the inscription below the lion: '9-IX-1944'. As cited in a school historical textbook of Chervenkov's era, this emblem represented "the progressive advance of the country on the path of socialism",[76] that is, a socialist nation in progress.

The National Emblem

The lion implied the historical continuity of Bulgaria. Its origin was claimed as early medieval.[77] Henceforward, it had been used in many circumstances: as a decoration for monuments and coins, as the main figure of flags and seals in the Bulgarian Renaissance, as a literary motive. Thus, the lion underscores Bulgaria's national past. Moreover, it symbolises strength, valour, fearlessness and heroism, that is, the Bulgarian national virtues and qualities.

[74] Both the French and Russian Revolution abandoned the old flag and created a new one.

[75] The Fatherland Front government had already proclaimed Bulgaria as a People's Republic and the opposition parties had been repressed.

[76] Burmov, Dikovski (1950[5]): 123.

[77] Stoyanov (1981): 13 states that the image of the lion was used as a decoration in the palaces of the khan Omurtag. He also mentions the lion as "the national symbol of the Bulgarian people since ancient times".

The five-pointed star hints at internationalism and socialism, whilst its red colour claims unity with the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. The synthesis of the lion and the red star suggests a connection between the revolutionary apostles of the national liberation movement of the 1870s and the partisans of the resistance movement in the Second World War.[78] The azure-blue field makes internationalism clearer; it symbolises the participation of the Bulgarian people in the struggle for peace in the world. The cog-wheel and the ears of wheat on the lion's right and left highlight the alliance of workers and peasants, and, more especially, their unity in social struggles. The ears of wheat, in particular, stand for the Bulgarian peoples' love of work and the fertility of the Bulgarian land.[79] The lion, the star, the azure-blue field, the cog-wheel and the ears of wheat incarnate both proletarian internationalism and socialist patriotism. The Bulgarian national emblem thus attempted to forge a synthesis between a national past and socialist present.

5.5.b *The National Flag*

Although the national emblem might have its roots in the ancient or recent past, the national flag is a matter of modernity. It could be argued that the origin of a national flag is uncertain or, rather, invented, as the national flag is usually instituted with the formation of an independent national state. National qualities are supposed to be depicted on the flag by its morally significant colours. National propaganda indoctrinates people with the national qualities, supposed to be represented by the flag, through the educational system.

The Bulgarian national flag has three colours, the tricolour having been established by the Constituent Assembly of Tirnovo. The oldest flag was made barely a year before Bulgaria's autonomy (1878).[80] Officially, it claimed its origin in the flag used by the Bulgarian League of Rakovski based in Belgrade.[81] The symbolism of the three colours is as follows. The white represents peace and progress and the red stands

[78] Burmov, Dikovski (1950[5]): 123.
[79] Burmov, Dikovski (1950[5]): 123.
[80] Stoyanov (1981): 15 and Encyclopaedia Bulgaria (1981): 384 ff. For some details on the alleged evolution of the Bulgarian national flag through the ages see Klincharov (1941): 19–32 passim, who is in accordance with the national myth.
[81] Burmov, Dikovski (1950[5]): 123.

for the socialist revolution. The green has a double meaning; it signifies love for the fatherland and the struggles for national liberation as well as the fertility of the Bulgarian land.[82] Apparently, some of the meanings of the colours of the Bulgarian national flag were attributed to it after 9 September.

The Bulgarian national flag retained its tricolour shape after the Constitution of 1947. The national emblem in its new form was located in the flag's upper left-hand corner to underscore the relation between the national liberation of 1878 and that of 9.IX.1944. The BCP and the Fatherland Front government had no reason to change the shape of the flag. They called the Bulgarian people to fight against the Germans and the Bulgarian governments of the Second World War under the Bulgarian tricolour. The BCP had adopted the tricolour alongside the red one since the 1930s and brandished both as symbols of national liberation and socialist revolution.

Identity politics can explain why the Bulgarian communists opted for national discourses through commemorative events. First, discourses on shared memories and common future goals operate as a mechanism for silencing controversies at both the political and social level, since the more domestic issues become nationalised, the less contentious they become. And second, Bulgarian society was heir to old politics couched in a language of national identity. For a long time, identity-building in Bulgaria had given prominence to the 'nation' and nationalism had constituted a convenient ideology for overcoming 'heteroglossia'.[83] As collective identities usually take considerable time and effort to construct and are compelling and embedded in a country's political culture, the Bulgarian communists opted for reconstructing rather than deconstructing already shaped collective identities and rebuilding from scratch.

As we have seen, the BCP did not only take advantage of past national celebrations in order to capitalise on the national past, but also introduced new ones to glorify the communist contribution to Bulgarian society and the communist martyrs and heroes, and to legitimise and underpin socialism. In this context, old commemorations

[82] Stoyanov (1981): 15–16.

[83] Verdery (1991: 122), drawing on Bakhtin, uses this term to define the difference between the language of power and the social dialects that people below speak.

and anniversaries acquired additional socialist characteristics, while new socialist celebrations acquired national properties. Through commemorative events, the way that the BCP imagined the national past was presented and propagated in Bulgarian society. Finally, by presenting itself as the natural successor of the national liberation movement and as the vanguard of the contemporary modernisation of Bulgaria, the BCP assumed a national role and took on national characteristics. As the communist-led Fatherland Front orchestrated celebrations of symbols of Bulgarian history and claimed that the communist regime was the peak in the long, linear course of Bulgarian history, Bulgarians were encouraged to worship a communist-view of their society.

National holidays, commemorations and anniversaries constituted a powerful weapon in the political arsenal of the BCP. On national holidays, the BCP and the Fatherland Front were solemn orators speaking about, and in the name of, the Bulgarian nation. They used commemorations and anniversaries effectively to promote their political purposes, insofar as national holidays were bound up with contemporary political topics. A significant example is the conducting of the referendum on people's democracy just a day before the second celebration of the most significant national holiday, 9 September.

The BCP's political agitation and propaganda aimed to convince the Bulgarian people that the nation as an entity shared a common past and a common future. As we have seen in this chapter, commemorations and anniversaries underscored this concept by establishing a sense of equivalence and continuity between a selectively constructed and remembered past and the present. The struggle of the Bulgarian people for liberation from the Turkish yoke, their desire and wrestling for democratic rights and national sovereignty, since imperialists ruled the country, and, finally, the uprising of 9 September were all parts of a common national past. Simultaneously, a bright, prosperous, wealthy *new Bulgaria* was celebrated on May Day. It was the new socialist society the Bulgarian nation would together develop and advance. Finally, by 24th May celebrations, Bulgaria was situated in the eastern socialist arena, among all the Slav nations. This national holiday, in particular, was used to bring out the meaning of the eternal fraternity with the big Slav brother and twice liberator of Bulgaria, the Russian people. Thus, on the occasion of commemorative events the BCP spoke about Bulgaria's place in the world.

The BCP argued that what characterised the Bulgarian nation on each national holiday was, first and foremost, national unity. Working people, peasants, intellectuals, army and militia rallied round the tricolour, the greatest symbol of national identity, and participated 'to the last' in manifestations supervised by the AgitProp and the government. In addition, national symbols, the flag and the emblem, gave symbolic representation to national identity and national values as given by the new regime.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen so far, the BCP had recourse to the influential and politically powerful national idea to accomplish its own political aims. Actually, it adopted a systematic and extensive nationalist discourse as a means to gain popular support and consolidate its power. This discourse was articulated in all possible discursive domains: the resistance movement, radio broadcasting, songs, manifestos and proclamations, the official press, domestic politics, the struggle against the opposition, foreign policy, national questions, education, historiography, commemorations, anniversaries, and symbols.

The BCP, a self-proclaimed Marxist party and a member of the Comintern, followed the path of the international communist movement. Despite the fact that classical Marxism was firmly internationalist, during the 1930s it turned to nationalism for several reasons: the lack of a coherent traditional Marxist theory of nationalism; the crisis of 'scientific socialism' on the levels of both theory and practice; Leninist and Stalinist concessions to key nationalist issues; the Comintern's endemic flirtations with nationalism; the dynamics of nationalism which eventually rendered fascism a catalyst in Europe; and the relative isolation and/or ban of communist parties in many European countries. People's front strategy, proclaimed at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and aiming to assist communist parties to assume a hegemonic role at a national level, finally introduced a systematic, ambitious, and extensive nationalism. The BCP was in no position to resist this process. It was a loyal member of the highly centralised Comintern and a thoroughly Stalinised party. Most of its members had grown up politically in the USSR, while its own leader, Dimitrov, was himself the architect of the popular front and the main developer of the so-called 'national line' of the Comintern. Additionally, the Bulgarian communists applied this national policy to a pro-Slav country with traditionally friendly relations and deep-felt emotions towards Russia. Indeed, the Bulgarian society had inherited discourses in education and historiography couched in the affiliation of Bulgaria with Russia, notably expectations of the intervention of *dyado Ivan* in Ottoman times, and Russian aid in the national liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire and its unification. Besides, celebrations of Cyril and Methodius, pride in the

invention of the Cyrillic script, the basis of Slav languages, and a sense of Slavic kinship had already fashioned Bulgaria's inclination towards the Slavic East. Furthermore, national heroes, events, demands and slogans all originated in the so-called national revival and the national liberation movement of Bulgaria could be projected on and linked with the resistance movement and communist ideals and politics—through considerable selective remembering and vital forgetting, of course. Despite the fact that on the eve of the Second World War the BCP was a clandestine party of low membership, it had enjoyed significant support in the aftermath of the First World War, while the Bulgarian society had shown signs of periodic radicalisation. All in all, this meant that the BCP's national propaganda had a greater chance of success than that of other communist parties.

The role of the undisputed leader of the BCP in the 1940s, Georgi Dimitrov, in adopting the 'national line' was significant even since the Leipzig trial. Not only did this trial catapult the international acknowledgement of Dimitrov within the communist and anti-fascist movement, but also Dimitrov's plea became the first major discursive instance of the reconciliation of Marxism with nationalism. Dimitrov, along with Thorez and Togliatti, managed to ratify people's front strategy at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and introduced the 'national line' in the communist politics henceforth. Purges within the communist parties of the late 1930s opened the way for 'national line' application and the predominance of the so-called Muscovites. Going strong during the Second World War, this new 'national line' enjoyed unqualified success. In many European countries, clandestine communist parties gained legitimisation leading resistance movements. Some of them were transformed from small cadres into massive parties. They set up political coalitions, built political alliances, and mobilised the people in the resistance movement. This course eventually underpinned communist takeovers. More especially, the Bulgarian communists accredited the resistance movement with national perspective using theories with nationalist aspects, such as anti-imperialism and socialist patriotism; dividing the Bulgarian political sphere into patriots and traitors; giving partisan apparatuses names with national connotations; and articulating a nationalist discourse through all possible propaganda means (texts, events, songs, rituals). Most interestingly, they downplayed communism, Sovietisation, and internationalism.

At the end of the war, communist-dominated coalition governments were formed all over Eastern Europe. People's Republic sig-

nalled the transition to socialism. Despite the radicalisation of Eastern European societies and the prestige the communists gained from both the resistance and the Red Army, communist parties were not unchallenged. Their position became precarious, as international agreements demanded free elections and cabinet reshuffles unfavourable to the communists, and their former allies began splitting off and setting up independent parties that jeopardised people's front governments. To navigate the political as well as economic difficulties caused by the war, the communists resorted to nationalism; significantly, they constructed the concept of national unity and they presented themselves as the vanguard of their nations rather than the proletariat. As the case of the BCP has shown, national discourses downplayed communist reliance on the Soviet Union and the Red Army; were used to refute opposition claims that the BCP was a Russified party that received directives from the Soviet Union; legitimised communist projects of modernisation and nationalisation; justified the occupation of key apparatuses and salami tactics; contributed to the de-legitimisation and incrimination of the opposition; and assisted the communists in pacifying Bulgarian society.

With regard to the international arena, Eastern European countries were integrated into the socialist bloc. This made the communists appear Soviet stooges. Making bloc-membership wholly compatible with national identity relieved such criticism. Within this framework, a new anti-imperialist, national task of the communists emerged: to maintain national independence and sovereignty as well as to ward off threats coming from the USA and enemy-nations. The Bulgarian communists could argue that adherence to the socialist bloc and close relations with the USSR were compatible with the Slav character of the Bulgarian nation. The division of the world into two camps explains the BCP's foreign policy on claims to Western Thrace at the expense of Greece and on negotiations for the unification of Macedonia aiming to ease Bulgarian-Yugoslavian rapprochement and ensure the incorporation of Yugoslavia into the socialist camp. Nationalism alternatively explains approaching Western Thrace as national land and imagining Macedonians as of Bulgarian origin.

In the domain of culture, the communists legitimised their regime by presenting Bulgarian history as a linear drift towards the socialist era and the communists as the heirs to the great traditions and the best values of the Bulgarian nation. Communist leaders portrayed themselves as successors of the greatest figures of Bulgarian history.

To carry out this project, the so-called 'historical front' elaborated an ethno-symbolistic evolutionary schema to interpret the national phenomenon (from tribe to 'narod' and then to nation), in which Marxian axioms (modes of production, socioeconomic formations, classes) were merged with national categories (narod, land, language, kinship). While history-writing was revising the national past, commemorations and anniversaries reinterpreted the national identity, reshaped collective memory, and propagandised communist achievements. National symbols (flag and emblem) encapsulated national identity and national values as given by the new regime. The Bulgarian flag and emblem combined socialist and national elements and values. By manipulating texts, events, and symbols the communist regime was popularised.

It could be suggested that the BCP was neither alone nor unique in presenting itself as a patriotic party; and, as references to communist parties of Western Europe in this book have already indicated, this phenomenon is not limited in Eastern Europe, where communist parties seized power. All communist parties of the time were, to a greater or lesser extent, loyal members of the Comintern, followed a common policy and respected the Soviet paradigm. They received Soviet dictates and did not contradict Stalinist directives. However, to quote McDermot, "the communist experience should not be reduced to the crude equation: CP=Comintern=agent of Moscow";[1] rather "deep commitment to internationalism… [and] deeply felt fidelity… that the Russians had superior revolutionary experience and held the key to human progress",[2] in concomitance with the necessity for backing from the USSR in order to consolidate their power after takeovers, all inclined local communists to accept the Moscow line. Most importantly, the nationalist turn of the Comintern does not seem to be a Stalinist directive at all. On the contrary, Dimitrov and the so-called 'innovators' played a very significant role. Interestingly, as McDermot and Agnew have disclosed, "Stalin appears to have given Dimitrov almost carte-blanche".[3] During the Second World War, the connection between hard-pressed communist parties leading resistance movements and the Soviet centre became erratic. The example of the Titoist partisans, the less loyal to Stalinist directives, is striking. During the post-war years, as we have already seen, there was no overall Stalinist

[1] McDermot (1998): 32.
[2] McDermot and Agnew (1996): 59.
[3] McDermot and Agnew (1996): 125.

blueprint, not to mention inconsistencies in the Soviet foreign policy of the time. To understand this turn of Marxist institutions to nationalism, we need to carry out a more in-depth analysis than the thesis of Stalinist directives suggests. But before exploring the reasons for this turn we need to analyse the specific nationalist discourse articulated by the communists.

Marxist Nationalism

Norbu states:

> Marxism thinks in term of class, nationalism feels in terms of the nation or nation-state; whereas Marxism operates in terms of class interest, nationalism acts in terms of national interest; whereas Marxism seeks to unite on the basis of class solidarity, nationalism unites on the basis of national unity transcending class division; whereas Marxism conducts class struggle, nationalism engages in a nationalist movement; whereas Marxism dreams of creating a transnational, classless, stateless global community, nationalism seeks to create or/and defend the nation-state… *Nationalism is exactly in theory the opposite of classical Marxism though not of Marxism-Leninism, which facilitated the objective coalescence between Marxism and nationalism.*[4]

Indeed, Marxism and nationalism explicitly set off from distinct points of departure. Yet, like all ideologies, they are of a protean nature: in their process different versions may come into being.[5] Hence, in their historical course, Marxism and nationalism changed their shape at will depending on the political agents involved; when they intersected each other, they transformed each other.

As we have seen, the discourse articulated by Bulgarian communists involved the interpretation of politics in national terms; the prioritising of the nation-state; deployment of national symbols; imagining the 'other' and the enemy in particular national ways; the determination of national interests and ideals; the sacralisation of territory; the imagining of the national past; and ritualisation of the nation's celebration. It revolved around the nation, which was used as a principle of social

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[4] Norbu (1992): 128–129.

[5] Regarding Marxism one can speak of Marxian Marxism (of Marx and Engels), Leninist Marxism, Stalinist Marxism, Trotskyist Marxism, classical Marxism, étatist Marxism etc. Concerning nationalism Smith A. (1999): 98 has depicted the transformative nature of nationalism drawing a parallel with the river God Achelous, while Munck (1986): 1 has stressed the 'chameleon qualities of nationalism'.

organisation and mobilisation. This nationalist discourse placed alongside another discourse, that of Marxist socialism, generated a specific pattern of nationalism, which we call 'Marxist nationalism'. This specific discourse allowed the BCP to present itself as a patriotic party and gave the communists the chance to position themselves as both Marxists and patriots. Indeed, it welded Marxism and nationalism together into the over-determined subject position of Marxist nationalism but, at the same time alas, it altered the identity of its component parts as given at the time.

Marxist nationalism was a syncretic discourse recasting earlier discursive elements in a new way. It utilised a bourgeois nationalist discourse derived from the French Revolution in order to unambiguously identify the state with the people and the nation as well as to demonstrate the compatibility of popular sovereignty with the sentiment of nationality. During the French Revolution, the people were mobilised calling upon the nation as a whole and identified directly and unequivocally with the nation. Sieyès argued that "all public powers… come from the People, that is, to say, the Nation. These two terms ought to be synonymous".[6] Following Sieyès' logic, which located the so-called 'ancient regime'[7] but not the 'patriot writers' outside the nation, the Bulgarian communists likewise excluded the Bulgarian 'ancient regime' (the bourgeoisie, the alien dynasty, fascists and their mouthpieces)[8] from the nation whilst retaining the so-called 'patriotic merchants and industrialists' within the nation. It was then argued that the Fatherland Front represented the embodiment of national unity, since it was a durable fighting union of all the vigorous, democratic and patriotic forces of the Bulgarian nation.[9] Chervenkov defined the Fatherland Front as a unity of "all robust Bulgarian, national and democratic forces"[10] and Dimitrov underlined that "there cannot be a real patriot

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[6] Sieyès, *Rights of Man and Citizen*, cited in Forsyth (1987): 75.

[7] Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?* (2003): 119–120.

[8] Kolarov (1945): 4, who quotes Sieyès specifically rather any classics of Marxism!

[9] Manifestos and resolutions (1945): 4–6 passim and The Fatherland War (1978, vol. 3): 46, 77 and 161. See also Rabotnitsesko Delo #236, 25.06.1945: 'The Fatherland Front disposes in effect democratic and patriotic forces of our nation, rallied round the BWPc, BANU, Zveno and the BWSDP'. See, also, Chervenkov, *The Fatherland Front government (11 September 1944)*, in Radio Station Hristo Botev (1952): 272–274, and Bulgarian State Records Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 4: 28 (a letter of Dimitrov to the National Congress of the Fatherland Front Committees).

[10] Chervenkov, *The Fatherland Front Government (11.09.1944)*, in Radio Station Hristo Botev (1952, vol. 7): 272.

who is not in the ranks of the Fatherland Front",[11] equating the Fatherland Front with the nation. In this way, the communist-led Fatherland Front merged with the state but, simultaneously, claimed to include the Bulgarian nation and people.

Alongside this paradigm, the Bulgarian communists borrowed the idea of the identification of people, state, and Party from Leninist discourse. Lenin had identified the state with the people, since a 'proletarian state', by taking possession of the means of production, was considered the real representative of the whole of society, the workers and the peasants.[12] And since 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' is the

Local Committee of the Fatherland Front of Varna, in Bulgarian State Records, Fund 28, Inventory 1, Archival Unit 242: 201. "Ahead against reaction and fascism for the triumph of the great people's affair of the saving and invincible Fatherland Front. Whoever casts his vote for the opposition votes for domestic and international reaction".

[11] Dimitrov, *The Fatherland Front is a lasting militant alliance of all democratic forces (11 March 1945)*, in Dimitrov (1972, vol. 2): 245.

[12] Lenin, *The State and the Revolution (August 1917)*, in Lenin (1976): 19–21 and 43.

political formation of the vanguard of the oppressed for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors,[13] the proletarian state is identified with the Party (the political vanguard) of the people (the oppressed). In this way, Lenin identified the state with the Party and rendered the Party the real representative of the people.

To the Leninist identification of people, state, and Party the Bulgarian communists would add the nation, from the Sieyes' theoretical framework. Lenin argued that it is the proletariat and its dictatorship which imposed restrictions on the former oppressing class,[14] whereas the Bulgarian communists, going beyond the Leninist tradition, had implied that it is the narod which imposed a series of restrictions on the oppressors and the parasite capitalists. Whereas, then, the proletariat exists independently in Lenin's view, proletariat, people, and nation are completely merged in the discourse of the BCP. The proletariat was no longer seen as a class within a stratified society; it had become in essence the people and notably included the Party, which, at the same time, was the soul of the state. The Party-state then merged with the body as a whole, at the same time as being its head. The Party was, therefore, at once the whole and the detached part that instituted the whole. In that way, the BCP was seen as the head of the people (that is, the Bulgarian people or, in other words, the Bulgarian nation). Not only did the Party *institute* the whole, but it also *was* the whole: it identified itself with the Bulgarian people or the Bulgarian nation. This theoretical framework was sustained by the self-presentation of the BCP via the Fatherland Front as a national party. As we have seen, the schema of 'if you are not within the Fatherland Front, you are not a real Bulgarian' loomed large. Hence, within the political institution of the Fatherland Front, the Party was merged with the state, the people, and the nation.

Identifying the nation, the people, the state, and the Party in this way, the Bulgarian communists effectively began to articulate what, following Lefort,[15] we might call a totalitarian discourse, since it negated the separation of the various domains of social life. In totalitarianism, the Party is "the milieu in which the state changes itself into society and society into state";[16] thus, the dividing line between state

[13] Lenin, *The State and the Revolution (August 1917)*, in Lenin (1976): 84.
[14] Lenin, *The State and the Revolution (August 1917)*, in Lenin (1976): 84.
[15] Lefort (1986): 79. Emphasis in the original.
[16] Lefort (1986): 80.

and civil society became invisible. The Party is also the vanguard of the proletariat, which in a totalitarian logic "is no longer a class within a stratified society, but it has become the people in its essence and notably includes the bureaucracy".[17] By this token, the dividing line between political power and administrative power also disappeared; the state apparatus lost all independence from the communist party and its leadership. This collectivistic conceptualisation of the people and the nation comprises what Lefort calls the totalitarian image of the 'Body'[18] or 'People-as-One' (that is, an imaginary classless society), but also, what we might call, 'Nation-as-One', since the Party had equated both its own political frontiers and those of the Fatherland Front with national frontiers.

Since internal division is denied, a division is forged between inside and outside. Nothing remained outside the Party, the people and the nation but their common enemies. The 'other'/enemy, defined as coming from the 'outside', was seen to either derive from the ancient regime (that is, fascism, the dynasty, the bourgeoisie, and reactionary elements), which was excluded from the nation according to Sieyès' logic, or to be the emissary of the foreigner, that is, the imperialist world (primarily the USA), which was excluded from the nation in Leninist anti-imperialist logic. Since the Party, which was the soul of the state, identified itself with the people, those who opposed the Party were excluded from the nation, and condemned as national enemies. As the Party was identified with the nation, challenging the Party became synonymous with challenging the nation. The denial or attack of governmental measures, i.e. communist politics (agricultural reform, emulation and shock-work, the brigade movement, monetary reform, and the Two Year Economic Plan) was identified with national treason.[19] As the Party was identified with the nation, it became the only genuine representative of national interests. Consequently, its measures were by definition the only ones favourable to the nation. Any criticism of Party measures was taken to be antagonistic to the nation.

The process of identification of power and society and the process of homogenising the social space are linked together. The Party argued that the state governs society in the name of the people. It claimed that

[17] Lefort (1986): 287.
[18] Lefort (1986): 292–306.
[19] The trial of Nikola Petkov (1947): 33–35 (indictment) and 367–375 (Prosecutor Petrinski's speech).

through the state (or using the state) it was responding to the needs of the people. However, the state in question was a nation-state, the people in question were the Bulgarian nation, and the civil society in question was identified with a nation. Nationalism, then, seemed to be a wholly appropriate ideology for the totalitarian project of the Party in a society were nationalism was well-entrenched. Nationalism was an effective means by which to identify the state with the society and provided an expedient basis on which to construct the image of a unified, homogenised will. Not just the totalitarianism of the state, which Lefort has masterfully analysed, but the *totalitarianism of the nation-state* inspired the discourse of the BCP in its efforts to legitimise its regime, to pacify Bulgarian society, and to re-build and modernise the Bulgarian state.

Why Nationalism?

We will conclude by exploring the reasons why the BCP and presumably the international communist movement of the time opted for nationalism instead of any alternative, e.g. Marxism, populism, social egalitarianism or any other purely Leftist option. We will focus on three reasons. First, nationalism was neatly fitted with the bureaucratic centralism and étatist functioning of the communist parties; it was their bureaucratisation, after being transformed into étatist institutions, which prepared the ground for the adoption of nationalistic motives. Second, the hegemonic project that the communists had pursued since the mid-1930s required a discourse able to unify and homogenise the society and in no way to divide it. Besides, such a discourse could underpin people's front strategy, as the communists were presenting themselves as the hegemon of the nation. Third, since nationalism was already well-entrenched in Bulgarian society, the image of national unity proved to be substantially effective for a party that sought legitimisation of its regime; it could gain credentials and popularity by presenting itself as the vanguard of the whole nation.

Nationalism has been developed in parallel with the modern state, as many theorists of nationalism have argued. To begin with, Gellner (1983) has argued that nationalism fitted a series of modern étatist politics: centralising administration, homogeneity of culture, mass communication, and a monolithic educational system. Breuilly argues that there is a close relation between nationalism and the modern state,

as the possessor of (indivisible) sovereignty over a given (limited) territory. He also sees nationalism as "a way of making a particular state legitimate in the eyes of those it controls"[20] which "can help provide an acceptable formula for orderly political change".[21] Giddens underlines that "nationalism is distinctive property of modern states",[22] which sought unitary administration, sovereignty, industrialisation, social transformation, internal pacification, and the legitimate monopoly of the means of violence. Todorova links nationalism with étatist communism (that is, the communist state praxis), since the state is the *raison d'être* and the *modus vivendi* of both, and notes that nationalism meets étatist communism on the path towards state modernisation; both articulated to a great extent a discourse concerning modernisation of nation-states.[23] As this book has meticulously shown, all the above links between the modern state and nationalism are applicable in the case of the BCP, which assumed the project of nation-state building and modernisation after its takeover.

Étatist communism should be dated neither to the 1950s, as Todorova suggests, nor to communist takeovers; rather, the process started long ago. Classical Marxism had always paid attention to the significance of the state, as a major communist aim was the occupation of the state machine to be wielded against those elements of the old ruling class who resisted the revolution. However, it was supposed that soon after this happened, the state would wither away. In fact, the October Revolution and, especially, Stalinism promoted the consolidation of an extremely powerful state. As experts on the Comintern have asserted,[24] Bolshevisation, a centralising, bureaucratising phenomenon, was transmitted to the national communist parties via the Comintern. Unanimity, dogmatism, hierarchical control from above, and bureaucratisation marked the role of the Comintern as a mechanism defending the power of the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union.[25] Within the administrative domain of the Comintern, the communists were trained in how to seize power and how to rule. Each national party

[20] Breuilly (1993): 387.
[21] Breuilly (1993): 388.
[22] Giddens (1985): 116.
[23] Todorova (1995): 88–90.
[24] McDermot and Agnew (1996): 61.
[25] *Theses on the Conditions for Admission to the Comintern, Adopted by the Second Congress, 06 August 1920*, in McDermott and Agnew (1996): 226–227. See the first and the fourteenth theses.

was seen as the representative of its own country and called upon to impose discipline on rank and file communists and obedience to the Central Committee. Operating within the institutional domain of the Comintern and being a Stalinised party, the BCP was transformed into both an étatist and a centralised organisation.

Within such an institutional framework, communist parties, long before they seized power, had transformed themselves into typical bureaucratic institutions even as tiny cadre-parties. They had acquired all the necessary characteristics, as shown by Lefort,[26] of étatist bureaucracies: functions are ranked hierarchically in the exercise of power within the Party itself; decisions are taken in the absence of any control from below; responsibilities are allocated in an authoritarian way; organisational discipline prevails over the unrestricted analysis of decisions; and continuity of roles, activities and persons is established so that a ruling minority is rendered practically immovable. Such a bureaucracy was well-suited to taking state power in some ways—its own bureaucratic structures paralleled those of the state. After takeovers, the communists became the bureaucracy of a nation-state (governmental authorities, heads of social institutions, directors of industries and collectives) so a plainly étatist ideology, such as nationalism but in no way classical Marxism, had been absolutely necessary for consolidating power.

To return to the BCP, nationalism was a convenient discourse for a regime to articulate the étatist project of both modernisation and industrialisation. Nationalism also fitted the bureaucratic centralism and authoritarianism of the communist regime, because it involves a discourse of unity and continuity, ideal for an authoritative power conceiving of society as a collective body. As we have argued, legitimisation of the Party's power depended on its ability to present itself as the embodiment of national unity and as representative of the people's will, as well as to present the Fatherland Front as 'a continuous, all-national union'. Nationalism could strongly reinforce this discourse. A series of so-called great national issues or tasks was presented which legitimised the Party's power and its hegemonic strategies. On a different level, nationalism offers a great opportunity for centralising culture and its means under the control of the political apparatus. In this way, the Party-state can produce a monolithic nation and nationalism, dis-

[26] Lefort (1986): 110.

abling alternative foci.[27] Command-type socialist systems find cultural centralisation useful for their totalitarian project as they can exercise considerable control over values and symbols nationally legitimised, that is, supposedly common and not only Party-determined, and exclude any alternative.

As has been shown, Marxist nationalism conforms to a wider totalitarian discourse engaged in by the BCP. In this context, the BCP presented itself as a protagonist and hegemonic power in a large-scale national project and not solely as a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary and purely proletarian party. The communists' major goal during the 1940s was to form a coalition government in which they would hold key offices, break the existing political structures, and establish new ones in which they would be the guiding spirit of social and political change.[28] Actually, deep post-war social crisis and proliferated antagonism fomented the division of the political space into two fields. At this point, nationalism, a horizontal exclusionary worldview of decades-long prominence in Bulgarian society, substantially complemented Marxism, a vertical exclusionary worldview which had been underground for a considerable time, in sharpening the social division even more and attributing positive features to the self and negative features to the 'other': for the conditions that prevailed in Europe in the time-span of the war were ideal for antagonistic forces to embark on a *war of position*. Such conditions are favourable for a *hegemonic articulation*.[29]

Thus, to understand the way in which the BCP tried to be hegemonic, we must turn to the ambitious Gramscian hegemonic project, since the BCP essentially and implicitly embarked on such a project.[30] For Gramsci, hegemony is not an instrumental political strategy, but a general political logic presupposing and prioritising the articulation of discourses able to construct a new common sense that can structure an emergent 'historical bloc'[31] and to express the national and popular aspirations in a broad sense through a historical bloc, in which the communists are to exercise hegemony. Gramsci proposed a cultural

[27] Verdery (1991): 304 and 315.
[28] Tomaszewski (1989): 55–56.
[29] I borrow these concepts from Laclau and Mouffe (1985): 133–138.
[30] Even though Gramsci appears nowhere in the Comintern's resolutions on popular front policy, Togliatti and Dimitrov had probably read Gramsci's prison notebooks, as Allum and Sassoon (1977): 172 suggest.
[31] Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000): 14–15.

ideological project in order to unite diverse political forces. This would enable the proletariat to transcend its corporate interests, represent the universal interests of the 'people' and the 'nation' and become the hegemonic class. According to Gramsci, hegemony has a national popular dimension as well as a class dimension. Given that Gramsci recognises that patriotism can have the power of popular religion, namely that it can acquire a social status of common sense, a hegemonic class needs to combine patriotic struggles and ideas with its own class interests to achieve national leadership.[32] In other words, the Gramscian project proposed a specific conciliation with the national idea. Following the Gramscian project, the communist parties sought to express 'national-popular unity' and to be recognised as the authentic representative of popular aspirations and national claims.[33] They were to realise this project through the establishment of People's Fronts, which culminated during the anti-fascist struggle and the partisan movement and finally through the establishment of united 'popular front' governments, the People's Republics. Then, the communist parties presented themselves as the backbone of national-popular unity.

The BCP constructed the image of national unity and presented itself as a patriotic party for one more essential reason. At the time of the communist takeover in Bulgaria, the BCP had not got the support of the great majority of the Bulgarian population. As the masses were not being proletarised and did not approach the BCP, the BCP was compelled to approach the masses, embracing and speaking effectively in their 'native' dialect,[34] that is, nationalism, well-entrenched in Bulgarian society after decades of official propaganda. What is more, a national discourse could respond to the yearning of post-war societies for unity and certainty.[35] Apart from the hegemonic status of national discourse in Bulgarian society, an almost complete metamorphosis of the BCP in terms of membership and the lack of a significant proletariat in Bulgaria complemented the potency of national discourse rather

[32] Simon (1991): 44.

[33] In Gramscian terms, see Gramsci (1978): 123–133, Simon (1991): 25 ff., 34 ff., 43–46, and Boggs (1976): 108 ff.

[34] By this term, I mean the language which has gained centrality in the political life. It is the discourse inscribed in and emanating from most, if not all, the official quarters of a society, which play a central role in forming public opinion (ruling elites, popular politicians, intellectuals, institutions etc.). This language guarantees to get people's attention, because the people have become familiar with and use it themselves.

[35] For an analysis of this situation at the aftermath of the war, see Abrams (2004): 91–103 *passim*.

than any alternative. Nationalism offered the potentiality of constructing a strong, unified will. Using nationalism then the BCP presented itself as the defender of the entire Bulgarian nation and the genuine representative of its aspirations.

Drawing to the end, we would like to address a very interesting question: that is, the fate and understanding of internationalism or the universalism of the working class in the context of the adoption of a national discourse by a Marxist party. In one sense, nationalism cannot, in principle, be reconciled with Marxism, since nationalism is premised on a perception of horizontal social organization, integration and structure, while Marxism emphasises the importance of vertical modes of social structure. Indeed, classical Marxists had always predicted the end of national divisions and placed great faith in the universalism of the working class. Is merging national and social domains compatible with solidarity and internationalism, insofar as nationalism comprises an exclusionary worldview whereas solidarity and internationalism are inclusive and universal? Since Marxist internationalism has become problematic since the late 19th century, and since nationalism accommodated itself with Marxist discourses, could it be argued that Marxism has finally proved incapable of surmounting the limits of the nation-state system? What should be the stance of current left-wing parties and movements in nation-states that have been fractured because of significant migration movements? Is there any room for nationalism in modern, multi-national, socialist movements? Could Marxist internationalism be helpful in modern times, taking into account its successive defeats by nationalism? Is there a need for the articulation or redefinition of universalism? Is there a need for a new universalistic imagery, which would promote values and identities that unite and do not exclude?

APPENDIX ONE

POLITICAL PARTIES

BANU: Founded in 1899 as a professional-educational agrarian organisation. In 1905, it was transformed into a political party led by Stamboliski. Both its leadership and its membership came from the agrarian masses. In the elections of 1908, BANU was the most powerful opposition party. During the 1910s, BANU developed anti-monarchist and anti-militarist ideas as well as declaring its opposition to Bulgaria's participation in the First World War. It led the uprising of soldiers in 1918. At the XV Congress of 1919, BANU turned to more radical views and excluded many right-wing agrarians. BANU governed Bulgaria from 1919 (as a part of a coalition government) and from 1920 (on its own) until 1923. In the elections of April 1923, BANU gained 52.7% of the vote. During its running of the country, a lot of radical reforms were realised; in the sphere of international relations, Bulgaria followed a policy of friendship and cooperation with the other Balkan countries and the USSR. The coup of 1923 removed BANU from power and many of its leaders were assassinated or imprisoned. Afterwards, BANU split into many groups (contradictory tendencies had been forming within BANU ever since the First World War); the most significant were BANU-Vrabcha-1 (advocating right-wing agrarian views and having as its leaders Gichev and Muraviev) and BANU-Pladne or 'Al. Stamboliski' (advocating left-wing agrarian views and having as its leaders Petkov and Avramov). Left-wing agrarians of BANU-'Al. Stamboliski' joined the Fatherland Front in 1942. BANU-Vrabcha-1 was the hegemonic pole of Muraviev's government (2–8 September 1944). In 1945, BANU split off; the pro-communist BANU remained within the Fatherland Front, whereas the BANU-Petkov became the most powerful opposition party. Since 1948, BANU and the BCP had been the only parties existent in communist Bulgaria, as all others were eliminated or self-dissolved.

BWSDP: Founded in 1903 after a split in the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party. Its followers then adopted the name 'broad socialists' so as to be distinguished from the 'narrow socialists', who would

later establish the BCP. It attracted artisans, the petty-bourgeois social strata, civil servants and workers. Traditionally, it had been a small party, which gained membership and grew in popularity when it took part in governmental coalitions (1919–1920, 1923–1924). When it participated separately in elections, it could not attract much more than 4–5% of the vote (in the elections of 1919). In the 1930s, a right and a left-wing were formed within it. There were some social-democrats who even joined fascist parties (e.g. that of Tsankov) and others who cooperated with the communists to establish the Fatherland Front. After 1944, it split again; a pro-communist BWSDP remained in the Fatherland Front and an opposition one adopted anti-communist positions. The latter was eliminated, while the former self-dissolved in 1948.

Democratic Party: Founded in 1896 by followers of the Karavelov wing of the Liberal Party. It attracted merchants, industrialists and petty-bourgeois social strata. The Democratic Party formed the government of Bulgaria from 1908–1911 (proclaiming Bulgaria's independence) and in 1918–1919 (the last government of the First World War which presided over the so-called 'national calamity'). After the war, its popularity declined considerably. It took part in the Naroden Bloc and was a part of its government between 1931 and 1934. It was eliminated after the coup of 1934, restored in 1945, and dissolved in 1947.

Federation of Anarchist-Communists of Bulgaria: Founded in 1919. Anarchists declared a front against any regime: bourgeois, agrarian or communist. After the mid-1920s anarchists divided into many groups, while they strengthened their position during the years of the Civil War in Spain. Its official newspaper was the 'Workers' Thought' (Rabotnicheska Misil). The youth organisation of anarchist-communists was given the name of Botev. After September 9, they renounced any kind of power and propagated the establishment of a society consisting of associations without classes or power. In January 1945, anarchist-communists attempted to summon a conference; however, just as it was beginning, the Militia dissolved it, arrested all the participants and incarcerated them in labour camps.

IMRO (in the 1940s): A tiny organisation largely comprised of army officers claiming to be the heir to the organisation that had led the Ilinden Uprising in 1903. According to Bulgarian nationalism, this

uprising symbolised the fight of Bulgarians who lived in Macedonia to liberate themselves from the Ottoman yoke.

Military League: Seemed to be a political descendant of the 'Military League', an organisation of conspirators and coup-plotters, founded in 1919 by army officers, who opposed the Agrarian regime and held strong anti-communist views. It sought to keep the army united and defended the interests of officers. In cooperation with the Naroden Entente, the Military League overthrew the Agrarian government of Stamboliski in 1923 by a military coup, assassinated its leadership and promoted a regime of terror in the country. It stood for different things and changed leadership often. On 19 May 1934, the Military League supported Zveno in another coup, this time against the then government of the Naroden Bloc. It dissolved in 1937. Many of the officers who participated in the Military League were also members of Zveno (e.g. Georgiev and Velchev). The most constant feature of its ex-activists during the Second World War was their pro-Allied and anti-German policy. Some of the members of the 'Military League' (Colonel Ivanov, General Stanchev) actively supported the communists' seizure of power, but they were later sentenced to long-term imprisonment.

Neutral Officer: A tiny conspirational military fascist organisation, founded in 1945 by a group of officers. Their leader seemed to be General Iv. Popov. Its political platform focused on overthrowing the People's Republic via a coup, restoration of the monarchy, and adherence of Bulgaria to the capitalist bloc.

Proletarian Communist Union—Bulgaria, Trotskyists: Trotskyist groups appeared in Bulgaria during the 1930s, led by Stefan Manov. They joined the Fourth International. During the early post-war years, they issued the bulletin 'Communist Appeal' (Komunisticheski Zov). They fiercely criticised the Fatherland Front; they were eliminated and most were imprisoned in concentration camps.

Radical Party: Founded in 1905 as the 'Radical-Democratic Party' by politicians who were differentiated from the Democratic Party. In 1926, it was renamed the 'Radical Party'. It mainly attracted artisans, land-owners, civil servants and teachers. It had always been a tiny party, only gaining support as a member of a governmental coalition

(1919, 1923–1924, 1931–1934). After the 1934 coup, it disbanded but was restored in 1945, when it split into a pro-communist and an opposition party. The former self-disbanded in 1948, while the latter was eliminated.

Tsar Krum: An ultra right-wing organisation with a limited membership largely comprised of army officers. It was named after the Han who reigned in Bulgaria from 803 to 814. Krum issued laws, carried out successful wars, and extended his state considerably.

Zveno: Founded in 1927 by right-wing politicians, army officers mainly from the Military League, and independent intellectuals. At the outset it claimed to be the 'ideological quarters' and 'supra-party organisation' seeking to prevent Bulgarian politicians from dividing the political spectrum into two opposite camps. Until 1933, its membership numbered several hundred people. Zveno members were adherents of corporatism, authoritarianism, and Italian fascism, and supported the achievements of Mussolini. They were also anti-monarchists and backed the participation of Bulgaria and Albania in a broader Yugoslav state. Zveno mainly attracted the bourgeoisie and the Army. Its prominent members, Georgiev (its leader since 1934) and Velchev, respectively Prime Minister and Minister of War in the first Fatherland Front government, had participated in the 1923 coup against Stamboliski and led the 1934 coup. After the 1934 coup, Zveno began a series of contacts with the left of the political spectrum. Its activists, such as K. Stanchev, St. Trendafilov, and D. Velchev with Georgiev as their head, joined the Fatherland Front. In 1948, Zveno was self-abolished and its membership was integrated into the Fatherland Front.

APPENDIX TWO

FIGURES

Blagoev Dimitir (1856–1924): Born in Zagorichane/Vasileiada, Greece. As a student in Russia, he was influenced by Marxism and established the first Social-Democratic organisation in Russia (1883). His political activities led to his expulsion by the Russian authorities. It was on his initiative that the BWSDP was founded (1891). During the Balkan Wars and the First World War, he fiercely criticised militarism and Great-Bulgarian chauvinism. He voted against the war credits. Under his leadership, the BWSDP ('narrow socialists') was transformed into the BCP, which was integrated into the Comintern and became of a Leninist type. He was the most significant Marxist theorist; for this reason, the communists called him 'grandfather'. He was the author of the 'Contribution to the History of Socialism in Bulgaria' (1906), the first Marxist analysis of Bulgaria's history.

Bagryanov Ivan (1891–1945): *Aide-de-camp* of both Czars of Bulgaria, Ferdinand and Boris. He was a right-wing politician. He was Minister of Agriculture between 1938 and 1941 and Prime Minister in one of the war governments (June–September 1944). At the end of his period in power, he declared Bulgaria's neutrality and began negotiations with the UK and the USA with regard to the cessation of hostilities. He was put on trial by a People's Court and executed.

Boris III Czar of Bulgaria (1894–1943): He reigned in Bulgaria from 1918 (when his father, Ferdinand, abdicated) until 1943. In 1935, he established a monarchical dictatorship in the country. He followed a pro-German policy during the Second World War. He died mysteriously in 1943.

Bozhikov Bozhidar (1900–?): A historian and ethnographer. He was President of the 'Bulgarian Historian Association', Director of the Ethnographic Museum (1949–1964), and part-time teacher of history at the Faculty of Philology in Sofia University (1949–1957).

Burmov Alexandir (1911–1965): A historian who specialised in the Bulgarian national-revolutionary movement. He joined the BCP in 1944. He was Professor of Bulgarian History at Sofia University from 1946; Head of the Department of Bulgarian History and History of Byzantium; and a member of the BAN from 1950.

Burov Atanas (1875–1954): One of the leaders of the Naroden Party; a founder of the Democratic Entente; and owner of one of the biggest banks in Bulgaria until its nationalisation. He resisted both the monarchical policy of joining the Axis and the communist policy of setting up the Fatherland Front. He became a Minister in Muraviev's cabinet (2–8 September 1944) and, for that reason, was tried by a People's Court. Later on, he was prosecuted again and died in prison.

Chervenkov Vilko (1900–1980): Born in Zlatitsa/Srednogorie. He joined the BCP in 1919. He was active in the uprising of 1923 and involved in the events of 1925. He immigrated to the USSR (1925). He was sentenced to death *in absentia*. Between 1937 and 1938 he was appointed Director of the International Leninist Party School. He was married to Dimitrov's sister. He was a member of the ECCI (1938–1941), while he did not enter the Foreign Bureau of the BCP until 1941. During the Second World War, he was Editor-in-Chief of the 'Hristo Botev' Radio Station. In 1944, he returned to Sofia to become a member of the Politburo and later Secretary of the Central Committee of the BCP. He became the Head of the Central Committee's Agitation and Propaganda. Between 1947 and 1949 he was Chairman of the Chamber for Science, Arts and Culture. He became Prime Minister (1950–1956) and was known as 'little Stalin'. He ceased to be General Secretary of the BCP in 1954. He was expelled from the Politburo in 1961 on the grounds that he had made 'mistakes' during the period of his personality cult.

Cheshmedzhiev Grigor (1879–1945): A prominent Social-Democrat. He joined the BWSDP in 1899. He resisted the monarchical dictatorship and the politics of Czar Boris during the Second World War. He was one of the founders of the Fatherland Front. In 1943, he joined the National Committee of the Fatherland Front. After September 9, he became Minister of Social Policy. In August 1945, he joined the opposition BWSDP-united; however, he died shortly afterwards.

Danov Hristo (1908–?): A historian who specialised in Thracology. He was Curator of the Ancient Department of the Archaeological Museum of Sofia (1936–1940); Assistant Professor (1942); and Professor of History of the Ancient World at Sofia University (1946–1975).

Dimitrov Georgi (1882–1949): Born in Kovachevtsi (district of Radomir). He was a printer's apprentice. He joined the BWSDP in 1902. He was an elected member of the Parliament for a long period. After the uprising of 1923, he fled to the USSR, where he established the Foreign Bureau of the BCP. He became Secretary and President of the Balkan Communist Federation (1923–1933) and Head of the Western European Bureau of the Comintern (1929–1933). In 1933–1934, he was accused of involvement in the Reichstag Fire, tried and acquitted. The Leipzig trial made him a very famous and heroic international communist figure. He then became the General Secretary of the Communist International until its dissolution and the architect of the Popular Front. He returned to Bulgaria in 1945 and became Prime Minister in 1946.

Dimitrov Georgi Mihov (so-called Gemeto) (1903–1972): The leader of BANU-'Al. Stamboliski' in the 1930s. He opposed Bulgaria's alliance with the Axis. In February 1941 he emigrated to Egypt, where he headed the so-called Bulgarian National Committee and developed contacts with the UK. He rejected cooperation with the communists during the resistance movement. After September 9, he returned to Bulgaria and headed BANU but, due to his opposition to the Fatherland Front, he was excluded from the BANU's ranks. Soon afterwards, he fled abroad and settled in the USA, where he established the Agrarian Committee. This was planned to unite all powerful forces opposed to the communists and to fight the Eastern European communist regimes. In parallel, he headed the Bulgarian National Committee, which had been founded in 1944 and sought to resist the communist regime in Bulgaria.

Dimitrov-Marek, Stanke (1889–1944): Born in Dupnitsa (renamed Stanke Dimitrov after 1944). A lawyer. He joined the BWSDP ('narrow socialists') in 1904. Between 1920 and 1925, he assumed high-ranking party positions. He was arrested on the eve of the uprising of 1923, but later released. Under his leadership, the illegal Conference of the BCP took place in Vitosha and agreed a new uprising during 1925. After

the terrorist explosion at Sveta Nedelya church, he was denied charge of responsible posts of the BCP. He was sentenced to death *in absentia* and immigrated to the USSR. He returned to Bulgaria in 1935 and was elected Secretary of the Central Committee of the BCP. In 1937 he left for Moscow, where he became a member of the Foreign Bureau of the BCP and Editor of the Radio Station 'Hristo Botev'. He returned to Bulgaria with other political immigrants on the eve of September 9, but died after their aeroplane crashed.

Dragoicheva Tsola (1898–1993): Born in Byala Slatina. A teacher. She joined the BCP in 1919. After the events of 1925, she was arrested and sentenced to death but was amnestied in 1932. Between 1933 and 1936, she taught at the International Leninist Party School in the USSR. She returned to Bulgaria in 1936 and soon became a member of the Central Committee and the Politburo of the BCP. During the Second World War, she was a prominent leader of the resistance movement; she was sentenced to death (1942). Between 1944 and 1948, she was the General Secretary of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front, and she became Minister of Posts, Telegraphs, and Telephones (1947–1957). She later maintained a constant presence within the organs of the Party.

Dramaliev Kiril, Dr (1892–1961): Born in Sofia. He was active in the educational domain. He joined the BCP in 1921. He was an exponent of Dimitrov's front policy; and a member of the Central Committee of the BCP during the Second World War. In 1942, he became a member of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front. He was the President of the Union of Workers in Education (1946–1947) and Minister of Education (1947–1952). He later served as an ambassador in Eastern European countries.

Dobroslavski Traicho (1903–1964): Between 1933 and 1934 he supported Zveno as a journalist. He joined the BCP in 1942 and later on the NOVA. He contributed to the success of the uprising of September 9. Afterwards, he assumed a high-ranking position in the Ministry of War (1944–1946) and became Minister of Health (1947–1950).

Ferdinand I Czar of Bulgaria (1861–1948): He reigned in Bulgaria from 1887 until 1918, when he abdicated amidst popular dissent, strikes, and uprisings.

Filov Bogdan (1883–1945): An archaeologist and President of the BAN (1937–1944). He was the Prime Minister of Bulgaria (February 1940–September 1943), who signed the accession of Bulgaria to the Axis (1 March 1941). After Czar Boris's death, he became Regent until September 9. He followed a pro-German policy. He was tried and executed by the communist regime.

Gandev Hristo (1907–?): A primordialist historian of the old regime; he joined the BCP in 1945. He was Assistant Professor (1944–1946); Professor of Modern History from 1946; and Dean of the Faculty of History and Philology of Sofia University (1948–1951). He specialised in the Bulgarian Revival, history and ethnography.

Ganev Venelin (1880–1966): A jurist. A Professor from 1918. His main field was the theory and philosophy of law. He was Regent of Bulgaria (1944–1946).

Genov Georgi (1883–1967): Professor of International Law at the University of Sofia. He was an adherent of the Radical Democratic Party, which he supported until 1934. Then, he headed the group that split from the Radical Democratic Party and formed an independent Radical Party. During the Second World War, he supported the politics of the government. For this reason, he was put on trial by a People's Court and deprived of his right to teach at the University. When he was released from prison in 1945, he established an independent Radical Party opposite to the Fatherland Front.

Georgiev Kimon (1882–1969): Born in Pazardzhik. A Military Officer. After the First World War, he was made a Major and was one of the founders of the Military League (1919). He participated in the 1923 coup against Stamboliski; one of the authoritative figures of the terrorist regime of Tsankov. He was a leader of Zveno, which led the 1934 coup. Then, he became Prime Minister and also undertook several ministerial posts. During the Second World War, he participated in the 'centre of legal opposition' led by Mushanov and, in parallel, joined the Fatherland Front. In 1943, he became a member of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front. He was the President of Zveno from its restoration (1 October 1944) until its self-dissolution (February 1949). From September 9 until 23 November 1946, he was Prime Minister; afterwards, he became Minister of Foreign Affairs

(up to 11 December 1947) and Minister of Electrification and Land Reclamation (up to July 1949). Until 1962, he assumed several high-ranking posts in the government and the National Committee of the Fatherland Front.

Gichev Dimitir (1893–1964): One of the leaders of 'Vrabcha-1', he undertook ministerial posts as his Party joined the Naroden Bloc (1931–1934). He was in favour of Bulgaria's neutrality during the Second World War, but never joined the resistance movement. For his participation in Muraviev's cabinet (2–8 September 1944), he was brought to trial by a People's Court. After he was released, he joined the opposition BANU; he was prosecuted and sentenced to many years imprisonment. Before he died, he decided to join the Fatherland Front.

Girginov Aleksadir (1879–1953): One of the traditional and devoted leaders of the Democratic Party. He argued that Bulgaria should keep her neutrality during the war. He participated in Muraviev's cabinet (2–8 September 1944) and, for that reason, he was tried by a People's Court. He contributed to the restoration of the Democratic Party (summer 1945) and became Editor-in-Chief of its official newspaper 'Zname' (Flag). After the opposition was eliminated, he was prosecuted and maltreated.

Hristov Hristo (1915–1992): He joined the BCP in 1944. A historian, he specialised in modern and recent Bulgarian history. He was Assistant Professor (1949–1953); Professor of History from 1953; and a member of the Board of Editors of 'Istoricheski Pregled' from 1950; later on he was given high-ranking academic positions.

Karakolov Raicho (1898–?): A Marxist philosopher. He joined the BCP in 1922. He taught as a Professor in the USSR (1930–1936). He was Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at Sofia University (1948–1961); Chief of the section 'Science and Education' of the BCP (1944–1951); and founder and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the BCP school (1945–1956).

Karakostov Stefan (1915–1988): A critic of drama and literature, historian, and journalist. He was a member of the BCP from 1948 and a Professor from 1951.

Kolarov Vasil (1877–1950): Born in Shumen. A lawyer (he studied law in Geneva, 1897–1900). He was a member of the Central Committee of the BCP from 1919. Between 1911 and 1923 he was a 'narrow socialist'/communist representative in the National Assembly, where he protested against the war. After 1923, he immigrated to the USSR. There, he held several high posts in international communist organisations: Member of the ECCI (1921–1943), and General Secretary of the Comintern (1922–1924). From 1924 to 1934, he was the official leader of the BCP. On 9 September 1945, he returned to Sofia to become Chairman of the National Assembly (15 December 1945) and provisional President of Bulgaria (15 September 1946) in which capacity he represented Bulgaria at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946. In December 1947, he became deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. In July 1949, he became Prime Minister.

Kosev Dimitir (1903–1996): A historian. He joined the BCP in 1944. He was a political prisoner (1925–1926). He was Assistant Professor from 1946 and Professor from 1950 at Sofia University; a Corresponding member of the BAN (1951) and full member (1965); he later assumed high-ranking academic positions. He was co-author of the first Marxist history of Bulgaria. He published scientific works only after 1944.

Kostov Traicho (1897–1949): Born in Sofia. A journalist. He joined the BCP in 1920. He took part in the preparation for the uprising of 1923 and the first clandestine Vitosha Conference of the BCP. In 1924, he was arrested and sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment. Between 1932 and 1938, he lived in Moscow; during that period, he made visits to Sofia on Party orders. During his stay in the USSR, he served in several posts in the ECCI of the Comintern, the Foreign Bureau of the BCP and the Communist University. He was one of the main communist figures who subverted the group of so-called 'ultra-left sectarians' amongst the leadership of the local BCP and he promoted popular front tactics. After 1938, he became Secretary of the local BCP and central organiser of the partisan movement. Between 1940 and 1942, he was the Editor-in-Chief of the official newspaper of the BCP, 'Rabotnichesko Delo'. In 1942, he was arrested again and sentenced to life imprisonment. After September 9, he became Secretary of the BCP. Then, he held several high posts within the BCP and the government, including Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Electrification, and

Chairman of the Governmental Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs (1946–1949). He was accused of Titoism and hanged in December 1949. In 1956, he was posthumously rehabilitated.

Kosturkov Stoyan (1866–1949): Born in Panagyurishte. A teacher. He resisted Bulgaria's coalition with Germany in the First World War. He became Minister of Education (1918–1919). He was charged with the 'national catastrophe' of the First World War as a member of Malinov's cabinet and arrested in 1922 in order to stand before a State Court. In the summer of 1945, he restored the Radical Party, which immediately joined the Fatherland Front. He became Minister of Education between September 1945 and November 1946, at which time he was in poor health.

Kunin Petko (1900–1978): Born in Mihalchi. He joined the BCP in 1925. He participated in the uprising of 1923. In 1925, he immigrated to the USSR and studied at the Academy of Communist Education. Between 1932 and 1934, he was a member of the Politburo of the BCP, then he re-immigrated to the USSR (1934–1936). During the Second World War he was an internee of concentration camps. Since February 1944 he had been a partisan-political commissar. After September 9, he became Professor of Economics at Sofia University (from 1945), Minister of Industry and Manufacturing (1947–1949) and Minister of Finance (1949). At the same time he assumed high-ranking party positions. In 1949, he was cleansed from the BCP to return as a member of the Central Committee in 1962.

Lambrev Kiril (1897–?): A historian. He joined the BCP in 1919. He specialised in the modern and recent history of Bulgaria.

Lulchev Kosta (1882–1965): A prominent Social-Democrat. He was a member of the BWSDP since its origin. From 1924 to 1933, he was Secretary of the Central Committee of the BWSDP. After 1944, he attempted to legitimise his party. He was elected its General Secretary and became one of its representatives at the National Committee of the Fatherland Front. Nevertheless, due to his criticism of communist initiatives, he was ostracised by the leadership of his party. He took the initiative to summon a fractional congress of the BWSDP, which substantially established the opposition BWSDP-united. His party was eliminated in 1947 and he was prosecuted and maltreated.

Mitev Iono (1916–?): He joined the BCP in 1941. In 1943, he was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. He participated in the so-called Fatherland War as a political officer. He became a Major. He was a history teacher, and specialised in medieval history, at the military school of Veliko Tirnovo (1946–1950).

Muraviev Konstantin (1893–1965): He joined BANU in 1918. He was one of the leaders of BANU-Vrabcha-1. He became a Minister in many governments and, finally, Prime Minister in the last government before the uprising of September 9, which lasted just one week; his premiership led him to be put on trial by a People's Court.

Mushanov Nikola (1872–1951): One of the traditional and devoted leaders of the Democratic Party. He was many times a Member of Parliament and Minister. He was the Prime Minister of the government of the Naroden Bloc (October 1931–May 1934). He was blamed for the 'second national catastrophe' (1922) and brought to trial. During the Second World War, he backed the legal opposition and was in favour of pro-English tendencies; thus, he was against the official policy of Czar Boris, which aligned Bulgaria with Germany, but also against the establishment of the Fatherland Front. He took part in Muraviev's cabinet (2–8 September 1944), the last before the uprising of September 9. For that, he was tried by a People's Court. In the summer of 1945, he was released and restored to the Democratic Party. Later on, he was prosecuted once again.

Natan Zhak (1902–1974): A Marxist economist and historian. He joined the BCP in 1920. During 1925 and 1926, he was the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol. Between 1926 and 1930, he immigrated to the USSR, where he studied at the International Leninist Party School. He was imprisoned (1934–1936); he spent most of the war years in a concentration camp. After September 9, he became a member of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front (1946–1949), and Director of Partizdat, that is, the publishing house of the BCP (1947–1949); Vice Chairman of the Chamber for Science, Art, and Culture (1949–1952); and Director of the Economic Institute of the BAN (1949–1951). He was a Professor from 1949.

Neikov Dimitir (1884–1949): One of the leaders of the BWSDP. After the First World War, he was elected Secretary of the Central

Committee of the BWSDP. In the 1930s, he considered a coalition with left-wing parties; in 1943, he became a member of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front. In the post-war years, he headed the pro-communist BWSDP as its Secretary from 1945 to 1948; he was an adherent of the Fatherland Front. He was Minister of Trade, Industry, and Labour (September 1944–November 1946) and President of the Grand National Assembly (1946–1949).

Obbov Aleksandir (1887–1975): He joined BANU in 1904. He assumed high-ranking posts, while he became Minister of Agriculture and State Properties in the independent government of BANU (1920–1923). From 1935 to 1944, he was one of the leaders of BANU-'Al. Stamboliski'. He participated in the Fatherland Front government as representative of BANU (Minister of Agriculture and State Properties, March-November 1946 and Vice Prime Minister, November 1946–December 1947) but in 1947 he lost the leadership of the Fatherland Front BANU and the trust of the communists.

Ormadzhiev Ivan (1890–1963): A primordialist historian of the old regime. He cooperated with the monarchical dictatorship and was one of the main figures who furnished it with historical arguments that the monarchy was the heir to and defender of the original Bulgarian national culture. He was an active member of the 'Thracian Scientific Institute'. He was the author of historical textbooks during the interwar years and books mainly related to the modern history of Thrace.

Pastuhov Kristio (1874–1949): A member of the BWSDP since the 1890s. After the BWSDP split, he joined the 'broad socialists'. During the Second World War, although he disagreed with the official policy of Czar Boris, he did not join the Fatherland Front. Even after 1944, he remained adamant in his anti-communist views; as a result, he was expelled from the Central Committee of the BWSDP and contributed to the foundation of BWSDP-united. In 1946, he was brought to trial and sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment. He was murdered in prison by a fellow inmate.

Pavlov Todor (1890–1977): Born in Shtip. A teacher and intellectual; a Marxist philosopher. He joined the BCP in 1919. During the 1920s, he spent many years in prison and was sentenced to death three times. He became Professor of Dialectical Materialism at the Institute of Red

Professorship in the USSR (1932–1936). He returned to Bulgaria in 1936 and dealt with publishing. During the Second World War, he was an internee in several concentration camps. After September 9, he became a Regent (1944–1946). Later on, he was a member of the Presidium (1947–1954); Professor at Sofia University (1946–1948); Director of the Institute of Philosophy (1949–1952); Editor-in-Chief of the communist journal 'Philosophical Thought' [Filosofska Misil] (since 1945), and President of the BAN (1947–1962).

Petkov Nikola (1893–1947): Son of Dimitir Petkov (leader of the nationalist Right and Bulgaria's Prime Minister), who was assassinated in 1907, and brother of Petko Petkov (activist of BANU), who was assassinated in 1924. He joined several agrarian wings during the 1930s. He opposed Bulgaria's participation in the Second World War as an ally of the Axis. In 1943, he participated in the establishment of the National Committee of the Fatherland Front and, after September 9, he became Minister without Portfolio in the first Fatherland Front government. From January 1945, he was General Secretary of BANU. In July, he resigned from his governmental posts and established the opposition BANU-Petkov. He also became Editor-in-Chief of the official newspaper of BANU: 'Narodno Zemedelsko Zname' (People's-National Agrarian Flag). He vehemently criticised the communist power. In August 1947, he was arrested, tried, and finally executed.

Popov Georgi: A member of the pro-communist BWSDP. He was Minister of Social Policy (August 1945–November 1946), Vice Prime Minister (November 1946–July 1949), and Chairman of the Governmental Committee on Social and Cultural Affairs (December 1947–July 1949).

Poptomov Vladimir (1890–1952): A teacher. He joined the BWSDP ('narrow socialists') in 1912. He took part in the uprising of 1923. After its collapse, he immigrated to the USSR and participated in the Foreign Bureau of the BCP. Between 1925 and 1933, he was the Political Secretary of the IMRO-united and Editor-in-Chief of its newspaper 'Macedonian Affair' (1925–1933). After 1934, he worked in the apparatus of the Comintern. After September 9, he became a member of the Politburo of the BCP. He was Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper of the BCP, 'Rabotnichesko Delo' (1945–1949); and Minster of Foreign Affairs (1949–1950).

Radoslavov Vasil (1854–1929): After a long period in the opposition, the Liberal Party of which he was head was given the mandate (1913). Following the crisis of the Balkan Wars, his government had to sign peace treaties which conflicted with Bulgarian national interests. His government decided Bulgaria should enter the First World War on the side of Germany. This decision led to economic stagnation, speculation, famine, and great discontent on the front. As a result, Czar Ferdinand established a new cabinet under Malinov (June 1918). He fled to Germany when a crisis broke out at the end of the war. Thus, he escaped the trials of politicians accused of Bulgaria's new 'national catastrophe'; nevertheless, he was tried *in absentia* and sentenced to many years' imprisonment. He never returned to Bulgaria.

Stainov Petko (1890–1972): A lawyer. He was a member of the Democratic Entente, which formed the government after the coup of 1923, and later Minister in Lyapchev's cabinet. During the Second World War, even though a moderate anti-communist, he had conversations with the communists. He participated in Muraviev's cabinet (2–8 September 1944); however, instead of being tried by a People's Court, he became Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religions in the first Fatherland Front government (1944–1946). He was one of the first theorists on the administrative law in Bulgaria; he was an academic from 1942 and a Professor from 1947.

Stamboliski Aleksandir (1879–1923): The most influential leader of the Bulgarian Agrarian movement. He was one of the founders of BANU (1899). He was against the war and the monarchy. For his political activities, he was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment (1915). After the First World War, the popularity of BANU increased dramatically and he became Prime Minister. His regime tried to restrict the power of the Czar and implemented many reforms but it collapsed after the coup of 9 June 1923 and he was assassinated.

Stefan I Exarch (1878–1957): Exarch of Bulgaria (1945–1948). The Bishop of Sofia from 1922. In 1948, he was sent into exile in Banya.

Tonchev Stefan (1902–?): A member of, and activist for, BANU from 1922. Between 1926 and 1945, he was an emigrant in the USSR. He returned to Bulgaria in 1945 and assumed high-ranking governmental and party positions (Minister of Railways, Posts, and Tele-

graphs, 1945–1949). He advocated close cooperation between BANU and the BCP within the framework of the Fatherland Front. In 1951, he became Secretary of the Standing Committee of BANU.

Traikov Georgi (1898–?): A pro-communist leader of BANU. He joined BANU in 1919 and the Fatherland Front in 1942. In 1946 he became Minister of Agriculture and in 1947 Deputy Prime Minister. From 1947 he was the Secretary of the pro-communist BANU.

Tsankov Aleksandir (1879–1959): He started his political life as a member of the BWSDP and soon became a contributor to the theoretical journal of the Party, 'New Era' (Novo Vreme) edited by Blagoev. After the BWSDP split off, he followed the 'broad socialist' tendency. Nevertheless, during the First World War, he was an adherent of Radoslavov politics and in 1921 was one of the founders of the Naroden Entente, which contributed to the 1923 coup, and later the leader of the Democratic Entente. He was Prime Minister between 1923 and 1926. Some of his significant policies were Bulgarian claims for an outlet to the Aegean Sea and unprecedented terror against revolutionary forces in the country. In the 1930s, he founded the National Socialist Movement, which was greatly inspired by Hitler's party. He was an adherent of Bulgaria's commitment to the Axis. Just before September 9, he left Bulgaria and settled in Austria, where he established the emigrant government of Bulgaria which operated until the late-1940s.

Velchev Damyan (1883–1954): A Military Officer. He was the main founder of, and central figure in, the Military League. He headed the 1923 coup against Stamboliski's regime as a member of the Military League and led the 1934 coup as a member of Zveno. In 1935, he was accused of plotting an anti-monarchist coup and sentenced to life imprisonment. As Zveno's representative, he joined the National Committee of the Fatherland Front. He became Minister of War (September 1944–September 1946). Later, he was sent to Switzerland by the communist regime as Minister Plenipotentiary. He spent the rest of his life abroad.

Vlahov Tushe (1899–1981): A historian, whose field was the new and modern history of Bulgaria and international relations. He was a specialist in issues related to Macedonia and Thrace. He was a member of the BCP from 1944, and a Professor from 1954.

Yugov Anton (1904–1991): Born in Karasuli/Polykastron in Greece. A tobacco worker. He joined the Bulgarian Communist Youth Union in 1921 and participated in the uprising of 1923. From 1928 he was a member of the BCP. Between 1933 and 1934, he was the Secretary of the Central Committee of IMRO-united. He lived in the USSR between 1934 and 1936; he studied at the International Leninist Party School. From 1937 he was a member of the Central Committee and the Politburo of the BCP. During the Second World War he was one of the leaders of the partisan movement, Secretary of the Central Committee of the BCP, and member of the Central Staff of the NOVA. Between 1944 and 1949 he was Minister of the Interior. He undertook high governmental posts until 1962, when he was dismissed, accused of 'serious mistakes' during the Chervenkov personality cult period.

Zarev Pantelei (1911–1997): A critic and historian of literature. He joined the BCP in 1932. Between 1935 and 1936 he was a political prisoner. He was Assistant Professor (1947–1950), and Professor of Theory of Literature in Sofia University from 1950.

APPENDIX THREE

TABLES

Table 1. Fatherland Front Membership

PARTY	end 1944		beg. 1945	March 1948	
	members	% of membership	% of membership	members	% of membership
BCP	14,120	53.80%	56.12%	389,408	56.76%
Zveno	410	1.56%	1.64%	23,544	3.43%
BANU-FF	8,682	33.08%	32.22%	213,979	31.19%
BWSDP-FF	854	3.25%	3.07%	36,314	5.29%
Radical Party*				3,813	0.56%
Non-affiliated	2,179	8.30%	6.95%	19,100	2.78%

* the Radical Party was restored in September 1945.
Data collected from Isusov (1983): 24 and 95.

Table 2. Social Composition of Bulgaria, 1946

Social strata	Number	Percentage
Workers	638,249	15.3%
Employees	191,757	4.5%
Peasants-members of co-operative farms	96,806	2.3%
Peasants and other categories	3,255,507	77.9%

Data collected from Todorov (1981): 453.

Table 3. Estimates of Labour Force, 1946*

Sector	Percentage
Agriculture	66.1%
Industry	14.5%
Other	19.5%

* Males only
Data collected from Lampe and Jackson (1982): 559.

Table 4. Percentages of Workers Who had Joined the BCP by the End of 1944

Districts	Percentages of workers joined the BCP
Sofia	10.62%
Plovdiv	14.23%
Vracha	23.91%
Blagoevgrad	4.16%
Pleven	20.33%
Stara Zagora	15.22%
Gabrovo	24.72%
Gornooryahovo	10.00%

Data collected from Isusov (1971): 140.

Table 5. Social Composition of the BCP (%)

Social strata	1919	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948
Workers	10.2	26.5	27.1	27.2	25.9	26.5
Peasants	46.2	51.9	48.1	45.1	43.8	44.7*
Middle class	43.6				30.3	
White Collars-Intelligentsia		8	13.8	14.6		16.3
Others**						12.5
Unreported		13.6	11	13.2		

* peasants: 39.8% and collective farmers: 4.9%
** students, housewives, pensioned, and self-employed
Data collected from Burks (1961): 35 and 52; Bell (1986): 81 and 131; Shoup (1981): 87; Höpken (1990): 183.

Table 6. Elections of October 1946

PARTY	Percentage of vote	MPs
BCP	53.16	275
BANU-FF	13.22	69
Zveno	1.66	8
BWSDP-FF	1.87	9
Radical Party	0.2	4
BANU-Petkov	28.0	90
BWSDP(united)		8
Democratic Party	0.5	

Table 7. Membership of Political Parties

PARTY	beginning 1946	October 1946
BCP	413,225	421,559
BANU-FF	152,788	150,756
BWSDP-FF	29,039	31,529
Zveno	31,111	34,186
Radical Party	5,595	3,873
BANU-Petkov	53,531	51,361
BWSDP-united	3,020	2,214
Democratic Party	1,607	1,240

Data collected from Ognyanov (1993): 90 and Isusov (1975): 57.

Table 8. Distribution of Local Offices

a. At the end of 1944, in 84 out of 92 districts and Sofia district

OFFICE	BCP	BANU	BWSDP	Zveno	Non-Party
Town Mayors	74	12	2	2	6
Town Vice-Mayors*	17	13	7	2	0
Village Mayors	1,039	147	9	2	35
Village Vice-Mayors	2,117	602	4	5	293

b. At the beginning of 1947, when i. Fatherland Front parties opposite to the BCP had been split and ii. international pressure had been exerted on the communists in order to make concessions in terms of power

OFFICE	BCP	BANU	BWSDP	Zveno	Non-Party
Town Mayors	73	13	10	3	0
Village Mayors	1190	666	40	40	25

* No data about Sofia district

Data collected from Ostoich (1967): 76–77.

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